

SOME ASPECTS OF INDIAN SOCIETY

—From c. 2nd Century B. C. to
c. 4th Century A. D.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| FOREWORD | |
| PREFACE | |
| CHAPTER I | Survey of Political and Economic |
| | Background |
| | 1 |
| CHAPTER II | Brāhmaṇas |
| | 35 |
| CHAPTER III | Kṣatriyas |
| | 70 |
| CHAPTER IV | Vaiśyas |
| | 105 |
| CHAPTER V | Śūdras |
| | 155 |
| CHAPTER VI | Mixed Castes and Other Diverse |
| | Elements |
| | 199 |
| RECAPITULATIONS AND CONCLUSION | 231 |
| REFERENCES AND NOTES | 236 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 285 |
| INDEX | 303 |

FOREWORD

The period extending from the second century B. C. to the fourth century A. D. was a crucial epoch in ancient Indian history. It witnessed significant social and economic developments, remarkable religious efflorescence, and a political kaleidoscope characterised by the foreign invasions and the settlement of the foreigners as a dominant section of the ruling aristocracy, which exercised a considerable impact on the existing social order. In fact the period holds the key to the understanding of the entire earlier and subsequent social history of India. The *Manu-smṛti* and the *Yājñavalkya-smṛti*, which were among the monumental products of this age, formulated, partly under the influence of earlier traditions and partly under the impact of the contemporary conditions, a system of norms and values of social life, which remained closely connected with the efforts to regulate Indian society for centuries to come.

In the present work Dr. Bhattacharya has critically discussed the main aspects of the society of this period in a lucid manner with a full grasp of the source material, penetrativeness of insight, objectiveness of approach, and with judiciousness in the correlation and interpretation of the data gathered from a wide range of literary and archaeological sources. While analysing the social structure in a historical perspective, in the background of the political changes and the economic developments, he has thrown revealing light on the social, economic, legal and ritualistic status of the major classes in the *varṇa*-divided society. His treatment of the Vaiśyas and the wages of workmen is of singular importance. By adducing fresh evidence and offering sound interpretation, he has brought into prominent relief how the forces generated by the socio-economic changes and the role of foreign elements accentuated to a marked degree the contradiction and conflict.

between the reigning ideals of the age and the actual facts of social life ; how they paved the way for the emergence of some new values and forms in social relations, including the relations of production ; and- how the *varna* theory helped in the assimilation of the foreigners and the inlandish social groups, which was necessitated by the particular conditions of the age.

The outstanding merit of the present work lies in the fact that it reveals not only how the social structure was but also how it actually functioned in this age. The *varnas*, as the author has clearly perceived, were not homogeneous social classes. He has convincingly shown how each of them was being split into an upper and a lower strata under the stress of mainly the economic factor, and how this phenomenon, along with the pulls and pressures of conflicting and mutual interests was closely connected with the process of the formation of classes, on the basis of the possession of wealth and power, which tended to some extent to cut across the ascriptive lines of the hierarchical social system of *varnas* and castes.

This learned and thought-provoking work of Dr. Bhattacharya will remain indispensable for every serious researcher of the social history of ancient India.

Allahabad
September 9, 1977.

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PREFACE

The following pages represent a modest attempt to study afresh the main features of the Indian social order, the forces that kept it together and influenced it most, of an exceedingly important period, roughly from the fall of the Mauryas to the rise of the Guptas. Exposed to the influences of startling political and economic changes, the Indian social order in the post-Mauryan period demonstrated both its elasticity and vigour, the capacity to respond to the needs of change and the ability to hold its own against external pressures. Our study which substantially represents the author's D. Phil. thesis accepted at the university of Allahabad in 1972, is an attempt to understand this interaction of the forces of change and stability vis-a-vis the social order.

There is always some kind of power confrontation in a given society, which has also been termed as 'the differentiation of the functions of control'. "Four antitheses—temporal power and spiritual power, civil power and military power, political power and administrative power, political power and economic power—illustrate the modern differentiations of the functions of control."¹ Transferred from the modern Occident to ancient India of our period, we may reduce these antitheses to the following : temporal power and spiritual power, spiritual power and economic power, political power and economic power ; the political, administrative and military power were yet to become antithetical. When these differentiations of the functions of control become sharp and the confrontations acute, they lead to a violent upturning of the established social order. During our period some of the factors which tend to the sharpening of the differentiations, e.g., the passing of

1. Aron, Raymond, in *Class Status and Power*, ed. by Bendix Reinhard and Seymour Martin, Lipset, London 1968, p. 205.

political authority into the hands of invading foreign tribes and an unprecedented economic growth, were abundantly present. Yet the Indian society withstood these pressures. The problem of social mobility was solved in a most admirable manner—India seems to have discovered a sort of golden mean between absolute rigidity and uncontrolled scope for social mobility, both of which lead to the ultimate destruction of the social and cultural fabric. ‘We know some mobile societies, and the United States of America may serve as an example, in which the social distribution of individuals has been very satisfactory. But we know also of some immobile societies, like India, where social distribution has not been altogether bad. The objective fact of an unquestionable supremacy of the Brahmins during 2,000 years, is a very convincing test of their adequacy for their social position, regardless of whether we like the caste-system or not. Surely stupid men, without money and organization, cannot keep such exclusive domination for so long a time. And surely, too, it is absolutely childish to try to explain such a fact through “prejudices” and “superstitions”. No prejudice if it does not perform something useful, can exist even 100 years’². It would, however, be wrong to imagine that the requisite adjustments were made effortlessly, in fact, the social system was put under very severe strains which left their impress on the contemporary social records.

A number of valuable works covering various aspects of social history of our period are available. Apart from the works of the old hands, like Kane’s tour de force, *History of the Dharmaśāstra*, Ghoshal’s excellent chapters on social and economic history in *A Comprehensive History of India*, Vol. II (ed. by K. A. N. Sastri) which supplement his *History of Indian Public Life*, Vol. II, and K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar’s *Aspects of Social and Political System of Manusmriti and Some Aspects of Hindu View of Life*

2. Sorokin, P. A., *Social and Cultural Mobility*, p. 531.

according to *Dharmaśāstra* etc., a few notable works by historians of the present generation have also appeared. R. S. Sharma's *Śūdras in Ancient India*, B. N. Puri's *India in the Time of Patañjali* and *India Under the Kushāṇas*, S. Chattopadhyaya's *Social Life in Ancient India*, and *Kuṣāṇa Studies* ed. by G. R. Sharma are some of the more important examples. Besides, there are a large number of works on the history of the caste system. A. N. Bose's *Social and Rural Economy of Northern India* is a class by itself. Despite the existence of these works, the feeling that there is still scope for a new work on the social order of the period from the points of view elaborated above prompted us to enter a field already trodden by abler persons.

The source materials available for the study of our period are large and varied. One has naturally to depend most on the *Smritis* of Manu, Yājñavalkya, Viṣṇu, Nārada, Brhaspati and the precepts of the Epics. On the assumption that social institutions and habits, especially in ancient India, changed slowly we have made use of the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya, even though it might have been composed during the Mauryan period. These works not only supply the theoretical framework, but also are of very great help in re-constructing the realities of the social set up. The dramatic and Kāvya literature of the period,—the plays and works of Bhāsa, Aśvaghoṣa and Kālidāsa, is also helpful, even though the themes centre round mainly royalty and aristocracy. The technical works like the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali, the *Saṃhitās* of Caraka and Suśruta, the *Kāmasūtra* of Vātsyāyana etc., offer valuable information. Buddhist and the Jain literature, especially the *Milindapañha*, the *Mahāvastu*, the *Divyāvadāna*, the *Saddharmapundarikā*, etc., contains a wealth of information. An extremely useful work is the Jain text *Āṅgaviṃśā*,³ which we may modestly claim to have used more extensively than has yet been done. Since it is very difficult to fix the dates of the *Jātakas* we have used the *Jātaka* materials mainly as

3. *Āṅgaviṃśā*, Introḍ., p. 36 was compiled before 4th cent. A. D.

supporting evidences. Some of the *Purāṇa* materials have also been made use of. Besides, the Classical sources like the accounts of Megasthenes, Strabo's '*Geography*', Pliny's '*Natural History*' and the anonymous Greek sailor's '*The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*' are of great value, especially for the economic aspects of the society. For the reconstruction of the material aspects of life, excavation reports, specially of such key sites as Taxila, Kauśāmbī, Hastināpur, Kumrāhar etc., are of great value and significance. For our purpose, the importance of the extensive series of coins issued during our period is practically confined exclusively to their economic aspect. Of more assistance are the inscriptions of the period, which often offer unexpected informations and illumine dark and doubtful points, besides acting as stabilisers to the often infirm literary evidences. Lengthening the list of sources here is unnecessary, since a fuller account can be found in the bibliography at the end of the work.

Foot notes have been limited to those which have an explanatory function. Similarly, well known source-references have been generally omitted except when interpreted on a new line.

It is my pleasure to acknowledge with gratitude all kinds of help and guidance I received from my supervisor Prof. G. R. Sharma, Dean, Faculty of Arts, University of Allahabad. But for his constant encouragement, help and care the completion of the work would not have been possible. I am also indebted to him for the kind foreword he has written for the book. I also owe a very heavy load of debt to my teachers Prof. J. S. Negi and Dr. B. N. S. Yadava of the Department of Ancient History, Culture and Archaeology and Prof. A. D. Pant, Head, Political Science Department, University of Allahabad, who gave me a number of invaluable suggestions and help. Shri Anthony Hyman of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, very kindly went through the manuscript and offered valuable suggestions for improvement. I take this

opportunity to thank him from the very bottom of my heart for this help. I am also beholden to my teachers and colleagues, Dr. U. N. Roy, Dr. S. N. Roy, Dr. (Miss) S. Mookerji, Dr. V. C. Srivastava, Shri V. D. Misra, Dr. R. K. Varma, Shri R. K. Dwivedi, Dr. Om Prakash, Shri D. Mandal, Shri Jai Narain, Shri G. K. Rai, Shri Jagannath Pal to name only a few who have all helped me in various ways. Thanks are due to all my friends and well wishers in our Department and outside for diverse help I received from them.

I am grateful to *South Asian Review* and *Archiv Orientalni* who published early versions of parts of this work. I also thank the authorities and staff of the National Library, the Asiatic Society of Bengal and Indian Museum, Calcutta, the University Library and the Public Library, Allahabad, British Museum Library and School of Oriental and African Studies Library, London for their help and cooperation.

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Finally, I offer my salutation to all the scholars whose works have given me guidance, strength and inspiration.

Allahabad,
11. 9. '77

S. C. BHATTACHARYA.

ABBREVIATIONS

- ABORI—*Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.*
- AGNI—*Agnipurāṇa.*
- AIT. BR.—*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa.*
- AIU—*The Age of Imperial Unity*, ed., Majumdar R. C.
- ANGA.—*Aṅgavijjā.*
- ANG. NIK.—*Aṅguttara Nikāya.*
- APAS.—*Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra.*
- AP. SR. SUT.—*Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra.*
- ARTHA.—*Arthaśāstra.*
- ASI—*Archaeological Survey of India.*
- ASIR—*Archaeological Survey of India Annual Reports.*
- ASPECTS—*Aspects of Indian History and Civilization*,
Buddha Prakash.
- ASWI—*Archaeological Survey of Western India.*
- ATHARVA.—*Atharvaveda.*
- BAUDH.—*Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra.*
- BAUDH. GR. SUT.—*Baudhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra.*
- BHAG.—*Bhāgavatapurāṇa.*
- BHAVISYA.—*Bhaviṣyapurāṇa.*
- BMC—*A Catalogue of the Indian Coins in the British Museum*, Allan, J.
- BR. UP.—*Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad.*
- BRAHMANDA.—*Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa.*
- BRIH.—*Bṛhaspatismṛti.*
- CHI—*Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I.
- CH. UP.—*Chāndogya Upaniṣad.*
- CII—*Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.*
- COMP. HI.—*Comprehensive History of India*, ed. Sastri,
K. A. N.
- ECONOMIC LIFE—*The Economic Life of Northern India in the Gupta Period*, Maity, S. K.
- EI—*Epigraphia Indica.*
- GAUT.—*Gautama Dharma Sūtra.*
- GLOSSARY—*Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, Sircar, D. C.
- HDS—*History of the Dharma Śāstra*, Kane, P. V.
- HOS—*Harvard Oriental Series.*
- IA—*Indian Antiquary.*
- IC—*Indian Culture.*
- IHQ—*Indian Historical Quarterly.*
- INS.—*Inscription.*
- JAIM. BR.—*Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa.*

JAOS—*Journal of the American Oriental Society.*
 JASB—*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.*
 JAT.—*Jātakas.*
 JBBRAS—*Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.*
 JBORS—*Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society.*
 JBRŚ—*Journal of the Bihar Research Society.*
 JESHO—*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient.*
 JGRF—*Journal of the Ganganath Jha Research Institute.*
 JNSI—*Journal of the Numismatic Society of India.*
 JRAS—*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.*
 KATH. SAM.—*Kāthaka Saṃhitā.*
 KAT. SR. SUT.—*Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra.*
 MAHA.—*Mahābhārata.*
 MAIT. SAM.—*Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā.*
 MAJJ. NIK.—*Majjhima Nikāya.*
 MANU.—*Manusmṛti.*
 MATSYA.—*Matsyapurāṇa.*
 MILINDA.—*Milindapañha.*
 NARADA.—*Nārada-smṛti.*
 PHAI—*Political History of Ancient India*, Raychowdhury, H. C.
 PTS—*Pali Text Society.*
 RIG.—*Rigveda.*
 ŚAT. BR.—*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.*
 SBE—*Sacred Books of the East.*
 SRENI—*Social and Rural Economy of Northern India*, Bose, A. N.
 SUDRAS.—*Śūdras in Ancient India*, Sharma, R. S.
 TAIT. BR.—*Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa.*
 TAIT. SAM.—*Taittirīya Saṃhitā.*
 VAJ. SAM.—*Vājasaneyya Saṃhitā.*
 VAS.—*Vaśiṣṭha Dharmasūtra.*
 VAYU.—*Vāyupurāṇa.*
 VISNU.—*Viṣṇusmṛti.*
 YAJ.—*Yājñavalkyasmṛti.*
 ZDMG—*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morganlandischen Gesellschaft.*

CHAPTER I

Survey of Political and Economic Background

From the second century B. C. to the 4th century A. D. India was passing through a number of revolutionary changes, political and economic, which had their inevitable impact on the social order and mutual relationships between different social groups. The breakup of the Mauryan Empire brought about consequences of far-reaching importance. It destroyed the political edifice so laboriously built up by the succeeding dynasties of Magadha—from the Haryāṅkas to the Mauryas. The strong Mauryan state and its efficient administrative system must have instilled a sense of security in its people to which they became accustomed for over one hundred and fifty years. To be deprived of this smug sense of security must have been a tremendous experience for the society. The Śuṅgas and the Kāṇvas failed to hold the country together. Scarcely had Puṣyamitra seated himself on the Maurya throne when Vidarbha rebelled. Even then Puṣyamitra retained control over a considerable portion of the Maurya Empire and performed *aśvamedha* sacrifice, which according to Kālidāsa led to his war with the Greeks. His death seems to have been followed by a further fragmentation of the country and his descendants continued to rule in Vidiśā till they were replaced by the Kāṇvas. The Śātavāhanas established a strong state in the Kṛṣṇā-Godāvarī region and by the beginning of the first century A. D. controlled practically the

whole of the Deccan. Orissa, a province of both the Nanda kingdom and the Mauryan Empire, now emerged under the Mahāmeghavāhanas as a power to reckon with. Under the redoubtable Khāravela Kālīṅga almost grew to imperial dimensions. The erection of these states on the south of Magadha cut off the history of the trans-Vindhyan region politically from the Āryāvarta, which could not have been devoid of economic significance.

Emergence of these regional states was not the most important consequence of the breakup of the Mauryan Empire. An event of a greater significance ensued. The extinction of the strong centralised monarchy of the Mauryas opened the flood gates of the Northwest and a stream of foreign invaders crossed the Hindukush and poured into the country from central Asia : the Bactrian Greeks, the Śaka-Parthians and the Kuṣāṇas. India did not suffer foreign invasion on such a scale since the Aryan immigrations. Alexander's invasion was hardly more than a campaign among the tribal states of the Panjab and Sindh, the results of which lasted no longer than Alexander's turning his back and dying prematurely in Babylonia. Even though the Persian occupation of the same area lasted for quite some time and did exert some amount of influence on Mauryan art and administration,¹ it seems extremely doubtful whether it made any real impact upon Indian society. Indian literature contains practically no reference to these invasions. To the contemporary Indian mind the Persian and Macedonian invasions were not events of any great moment. These events, howsoever important they might have been for the Middle and

Near East, left the Gangetic valley practically undisturbed. It was not so in the case of the Bactrian Greeks, Śaka and Kuṣāṇa invasions. These were of a completely different character. Unlike their precursors the Indo-Greeks, the Śaka-Parthians and the Kuṣāṇas penetrated right into the heart of the Gangetic valley. They established their political sway over a wide area, from the Gangetic plains to the valleys of Syr Daria and Amu Daria. India was thus brought into a live contact with the Hellenistic Orient.

Another region that demands attention is western India. In the first century B. C. eastern Malawa, which was gaining in importance even before the decline of the Mauryas—Vidīśā became more important during the Śuṅga and Kāṇva periods—passed into the hands of the Śātavāhanas. However, the Śakas were also gradually moving into this region and the area became a bone of contention between the Śaka Kṣatrapas, and the Śātavāhanas. This struggle weakened both the warring parties, but the Śakas managed to survive till the beginning of the fifth century while the Śātavāhanas bowed out of history much earlier, yielding place to the Vākātakas, Ābhīras, Bodhis, Ikṣvākus, etc.

Behind the maze of these varied political events certain economic motivations and forces can perhaps be discerned. With the growth of trade and commerce and their growing importance in economy, we find the areas controlling the main trade routes, especially the routes commanding foreign trade, also coming to hold the reins of political history. Thus north-western and coastal India became the most important seats of political power. An appreciation of the underlying economic factor will perhaps

enable us to get a better understanding of the pattern of movement of the invading foreign hordes. Crossing the Hindukush these invaders endeavoured to advance in two directions—eastwards to the heart of the Gangetic valley to gain control over the main inland trade routes, and southwards to the Indus delta and Gujarat coast, the area that held the key to India's commerce with the Western World. The long-drawn wars between the Śakas and the Śātavāhanas for the possession of Malawa and Gujarat were at bottom a struggle for the control of the vital ports on the western coast: Bharukacha, Śurpāraka, Kalyāna, etc. The general economic prosperity that characterised the Āndhra-Śātavāhana period may be attributed to their hold over the Andhra-Madras coast and also intermittently over the Gujarat-Bombay coast. It may also be suggested that it was the desire to gain commercial advantages that led to Samudraguṇḍa's southern campaigns. It is interesting to speculate the reasons why Samudraguṇḍa should have made a concerted effort to subjugate the eastern seaboard. With the probable decline in the volume of Indian trade with Rome and the expanding commerce with South-East Asia, the eastern coast was becoming an increasingly important commercial area. Samudraguṇḍa also made diplomatic offensives towards the other commercially important areas that lay beyond the borders of his dominions, viz., Bengal and Gujarat coasts and the North-West: Samataṣa, Davāka, Ārjunāyanas, Yaudheyas, Madras, Daivaputra-Śāhi-Śāhānuṣāhi-Śāka-Muruṇḍa, etc. These were all brought under his influence through a system of alliance. These very areas brought under diplomatic

control by Samudragupta were to be the targets of the military attention of his son Candragupta II. We find therefore that commercial and economic interests to a very large extent conditioned and provided the motivations behind the development of the political history of the period.

These economic forces, moreover, could not have been devoid of social significance. Since the Indo-Greeks, the Śaka-Parthians, the Kusāṇas, etc., entered India from or through Hellenistic Asia, it is only natural to expect that they brought with them certain Hellenistic elements. It does not appear that these were limited to a few external traits like a new way of dressing or image making.² What is more significant is that they also brought a new attitude towards life, which attached more importance to 'success' in this world, now measured in terms of material prosperity. The desire for wealth, comfort and luxury, a dominant characteristic of the Hellenistic culture, was at once the driving force and outcome of the tremendous economic growth of the Hellenistic period. An audible echo of the same can be detected in the Indian social history of the Post-Mauryan era. Lamenting the loss of his wealth the hero in Bhāsa's *Cārudatta* says, "In truth my trouble does not come from the loss of riches, for they can come again with a turn of fortune. This it torments me now that I have lost my wealth, my friends become indifferent to a man that's merely good. Again, if a man be poor his kinsman reck nothing of his words. His magnanimity becomes ridiculous. The beauty of a moon of virtue is dimmed. Without enmity friends are estranged, calamities

abound. The evil deeds that others do are put upon his head.”³ Elsewhere in the same play the burglar about to commit theft thus reflects : “As for a merchant greedy and rich, despising honest folk, ruthless in his business, if I get hold of his house my mind is not over-powered with remorse.”⁴

This new attitude unsettled some of the established values of life and created some changes in the social ethos. Although this new attitude was gaining an ever greater following, generally speaking our literature shows a hostility towards it. It is clear that a section in the society, the traditionalists perhaps, were trying hard to resist the growth of this new mode of thinking and life. That these new values were brought in by foreigners is hinted by the *Purāṇas*, which attribute these to the confusions caused by the barbarian invasions. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* describes in the following words the evils of the Kali age after the barbarian invasion. “Then property alone will confer rank ; wealth will be the only source of devotion. . Earth will be venerated but for its mineral treasure.”⁵

The extent of the impact the foreign invaders had on the Indian social fabric is becoming increasingly clear ; thanks to the labour of archaeologists. There was a lively contact between India and central Asia. Recent discoveries of Russian archaeologists, notably G. A. Pugachenkova at Khalchayam and Dalverzin-tepe and B. Y. Stavisky at Kara-tepe, testify to the great influence exerted by India, mainly through the agency of Buddhism, on the art and religious life of central Asia.

There was, however, another side of the picture which

is more relevant to us here. "In the early period of the Kuṣāṇa State, the main direction of cultural exchange was from Central Asia to India."⁶ The distinctive iron swords discovered at Taxila and disc-shaped bronze mirrors can be traced back to central Asian influence.^{6a} Kuṣāṇa Bactria, it appears, gave birth to a distinctive school of art which arose independently of the Gāndhāra school, and in its turn influenced the development of Gāndhāra style and Kuṣāṇa art as a whole. Excavations at Kauśāmbī have revealed that the Kuṣāṇa rule marks a break in Indian architecture tradition. "The discovery of the imposing palace complex on the Yamuna in the South-West corner of Kauśāmbī shows the introduction of a hybrid architecture, characterised by the indiscriminate use of stone and brick with a copious application of plaster, and of the true arch in the first-second century A. D. Among the new constructional devices noticed for the first time in the first-second century A. D., a considerable significance attaches to the true arch which along with the hybrid brick-cum-stone architecture was the gift of the Kuṣāṇas,"⁷ Kauśāmbī pottery of group III datable from second century B.C. to first century A.D. are of Graeco-Roman extraction; specimens of the same group have been found also from Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics of the U. S. S. R. Kauśāmbī has yielded numerous Śaka-Kuṣāṇa pottery types, parallels of which have again been discovered from central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan, etc. Similar types were also obtained from Rupār, Hastināpur, Ahicchatra, Bhitā and also probably from Vaiśālī. Same type of influence is found on the Kauśāmbī terracotta, in their

theme and style. Dress and ornaments of the clay human figurines at the site have a palpable non-Indian air about them. Arrow-heads attributable to the Bactrian-Greeks and Śaka-Parthians discovered from the heart of the Gangetic valley may also be noted in this connection.

The foreign invaders who influenced so many external facets of social life must have made some inroad into the internal character of the society as well. We have already referred to the possible introduction of a new outlook and attitude to life. Some idea of the impact of the Yavana invasion on the established social order can be gathered from the following extract from the *Matsya Purāṇa*. "There will be Yavanas here for the sake of religious feeling or pleasure or profit. The Aryas and the Mlecchas (will dwell) mixed up in all provinces . They will not observe the rules of caste and the order of life and be addicted to unrighteousness . The people will be of mixed origin, weak in body and will be led astray and deluded. Brāhmaṇas will sacrifice for Śūdras and Śūdras will take to teaching Mantras . Those Brāhmaṇas will adore such Śūdras anxious to acquire wealth from them.."⁸ The upturning of the accepted social norms and standards of conduct in consequence of the Yavana invasion has been described in the *Yugapurāṇa* section of the *Gārgīśaṁhitā* in the same vein—the disappearance of the caste distinctions, usurpation of the Brahmanical authority by the Śūdras and non-Aryans, the breakup of the family ties and the erosion of morality. As a result of the slaughter of men, ten or twenty women married one husband, women took work in fields, in business, and even served as

soldiers.⁹ It is true that, these foreigners quickly got dissolved into the vast Indian society and lost their separate identity in the assimilative Indian civilization, but before their absorption into the body social they succeeded in disturbing the existing social frame work, and forced it to make new adjustments to gain back the equilibrium.

We may now turn our attention to the economic structure of the society. Theoretically at least, the ultimate ownership of land seems to have vested in the king. King's right to a share in the minerals and buried treasures accrued, according to Manu, from the fact that he was the lord of the soil (*bhūmerādhipati*). That mines belonged to state is also indicated by the *Arthaśāstra*. Such lands the ownership of which could not be established escheated to the king who could re-allot them. The lapse of ownerless land to crown is occasionally confirmed by the *Jātaka* stories. At least one Śātavāhana inscription from western India records the cancellation of a royal gift of land on the ground that the land was not cultivated.¹⁰ It must, however, be added that a new grant was made in its place. In the *Arthaśāstra* we find state planning and encouragement of new settlements and the state clearly had the right to allot a piece of land afresh in case the land was kept fallow. Royal ownership of all land is found deeply embedded in the Buddhist theory of kingship—the king is described as the lord of all fields (*khetṭam patiti kho khattiyo*). Kātyāyana states that king's right to taxation springs from the fact that he is the lord of the earth. No wonder that Megasthenes wrote : "...all India is the pro-

perty of the Crown and no private person is permitted to own land."

What was the actual implication of the theory and how far it affected private possession of land cannot be determined.¹¹ Whatever might have been the strictly legal position, popularly land was thought to belong to the person bringing it under cultivation. "when a person clears away the jungle, and sets free a piece of land... people use the phrase : 'that is his land'. But that land is not made by him. It is because he has brought the land into use that he is called the owner of the land."¹² In the language of the author, however, one discerns a desire to avoid taking a strict legal position which perhaps induced him to add such riders to his statements as 'people say', and 'is called the owner'. The *Manusmṛiti* repeats the same maxim that field belonged to him who cleared away the timber. But it should be remembered that in the same verse the earth is also described as the wife of king Pṛthu.¹³ That the king did not have an unlimited power to alienate land and had to respect private ownership is proved clearly by Usavadāta's grant in which the field donated was bought from a Brāhmaṇa who had inherited it from his father.¹⁴ It was only the 'Crown Lands' which could be treated by the king as his private property and alienated according to his will.¹⁵ When kings made donations of villages it amounted only to the transfer of the revenue payable to the state coffer to the donee and not change in ownership. A south Indian inscription recording the donation of a field below the royal tank—it might have been crown land—to a temple takes care to specify

the name of the farmer who was to plough the land.¹⁶ It shows that even the peasant's right of village was not normally disturbed. There are also clear evidences of private owner's power of gift, mortgage and sale of lands.

We are thus confronted with what appear to be two sets of mutually contradictory evidences. The contradictions would be largely resolved if we look at the question of the ownership of land against the background of the Indian theory of kingship. The Indian king was conceived as inviolable, absolute, a veritable god and at the same time not only human but one who deviating from his appointed duty could be removed and even killed by people. The idea is perhaps best expressed in the supposedly late text *Śukranīti* that the king was appointed by the Creator (Brahmā) in the service (*dāśya*) of the subjects in the form of a master (*svāmī*).¹⁸ Although the king was the symbolic lord of the earth it did not interfere with the concept of private property.

There are some evidences of the growth of big farms and landholders which indicate a tendency towards the beginning of feudalism. Apart from the well known case of the Brāhmaṇa Kāśi Bharadvāja working his field with five hundred ploughs manned by a gang of hired and slave labourers, the Buddhist literature frequently refers to owners of one thousand *kariṣas* of land and eight hundred millions (*aśītikotivibhavo*). The custom of granting land to Brāhmaṇas (*brahmadeya*), to certain categories of state officials, to Buddhist and Jain monasteries, and the state's possession of extensive farms directly operated by the state agencies, all tended towards the growth of some kind of

landlordism and a consequent decline in the status of peasants. The position of the village headman (*grāmika*) seems to have become hereditary—in *Lüders List* we find a lady describing herself as the daughter-in-law and wife of the village headman (*grāmika*) and another as belonging to a family of village headmen (*gāmikanān*). By the time of the *Manusmṛiti* a *grāmikā* was also called 'the lord of the village' (*grāmasya adhipati*) and was entitled to a share of the king's levy in crops and other articles. In a passage in the *Milindapañha* we come across the term *gāmasāmika* for the village headman and the suffixing of the word *sāmika* which was used for a royal title is an indication of the growing importance and authority of the village headman. This is also conveyed by the general tenor of the passage which describes how all the heads of houses used to rush in haste to assemble in response to the call of the village lord. The hereditary village headman probably developed into petty village chief with extensive landed property.¹⁹ The *Kāmasūtra* refers to village headmen compelling even village women to work in their fields.

The declining position of peasants is suggested by a number of evidences. The *Milindapañha* passage referred to above shows that the peasants were put in the same group as slaves, hired labourers and servants, those 'who do not count' and had no say in the village affairs. Another passage in the same work describes agriculture and animal husbandry as the work of 'ordinary' Vaiśyas and Śūdras. A sizable class of dependent peasants, share-croppers and landless agricultural labourers seems to have developed. Share-croppers are also mentioned in some third and fourth

century inscriptions. That a large number of peasant population did not have enough property to pay tax to the state is perhaps suggested by the fact that they had to render free labour to the state undertakings instead. The ranks of dependent peasantry swelled as the result of the adoption of agriculture as a profession by the Śūdras in an ever increasing number. This coupled with the expansion of trade and industry led to the withdrawal of a substantial section of the Vaiśya *varṇa* from agriculture. There was now more room for the Śūdras in agriculture giving them an independent means of income and an opportunity to discard their traditional occupation of the service of the twice-borns, and this ultimately worked towards a betterment of the Śūdras' position.

The pressure on land arising out of the concentration of holdings to a certain extent was perhaps relieved by a vigorous movement to extend the area of cultivation by reclamation of virgin land. Improving quality and larger variety of agricultural implements as revealed by excavations perhaps helped this movement. The spade of the modern type made its appearance at Taxila in the first century A. D.—the same time when it made its appearance in the Roman World too. Hoes, chisel-headed spuds with broader blades, weeding forcks, curved and straight-blade sickles discovered at Taxila—all speak of an extending area of agricultural operation. That this was not confined to the Northwest alone but also characterised the Gangetic valley is proved by the findings at Kauśāmbī and some other sites. Fragmentary sickles of different varieties have been discovered from levels dating from the first century B. C. to the

third century A. D. at Kauśāmbī. The curved sickle discovered from sub-period IV.19, has a broader blade than the sickle discovered from an earlier level. The one discovered from the Kuṣāṇa level is smaller in size but shows more neatness in the curvature of the blade.²⁰ A fragmentary sickle with prominently broad blade was also discovered from a level assignable to the third century A. D. at Hastināpur.

Megasthenes noted 'a double rainfall in course of a year' and the *Milindapañha* three regular rainy seasons.²¹ However, like today, agriculture could not completely depend on rain water alone and the necessity of irrigation was appreciated and emphasised. Khāravela and Rudradāman illustrate the royal interest taken in irrigation. However, it is not possible to compute the extent of state initiative in irrigation. Moreover, the rate of water cess was so high that it seems doubtful whether small cultivators could get much benefit out of the irrigational facilities provided.²² Wealthy individuals also sometimes got tanks dug out, mainly for providing drinking water to the public and obtain spiritual merit. May be these tanks were sometimes used for irrigation also. Approach to agriculture, however, had become quite scientific—lands were classified according to the rainfall, climatic conditions and perhaps soil, and the kinds of crops to be raised were decided accordingly. The manuring of soil by dung, bones of cattle, small fishes, milk of *snuhi* (Euphorbia Antiquorum), etc., was known to Kauṭilya. Rotation of crops by fallowing and by sowing of different crops alternately in order to prevent impoverishment of soil was also

known from an early time. The variety and richness of agricultural products reflected in the literature of the period, both indigenous and foreign, also speak of general fertility of land. A large portion of India's export trade comprised of agricultural and forest goods. Quite a few of the agricultural products such as cereals, lentils, fruits, oil seeds and spices were exported abroad which may indicate that these were produced in greater quantity than necessary for domestic consumption. Since one of the major items of export was textile goods, it can be inferred that the growth of cash crops like cotton was given a great impetus. How far the advantages of the foreign exports of agricultural commodities reached the agriculturists themselves after the share of the traders remains doubtful. Whereas the votive inscriptions of our period record a large number of donations made by traders we rarely come across instances of cultivators among the donors.

Advanced method of cultivation and bounteous nature were the two factors that the man behind the plough had to depend on most. And nature often withdrew the bounty. Drought, famine and pestilence were not things of infrequent occurrence. In the *Jātakas* and the Epics we get graphic descriptions of the havoc that could be caused by drought and pestilence. The state was not always indifferent to the problems of the cultivators. Kauṭilya recognized the danger of natural calamity like famine and flood and advised the king to take various measures to give protection to the affected people. The superintendent of magazine was asked to set apart one half of the store collected for public use during the time of distress.

How far these precepts were actually practised cannot be determined but the great emphasis laid on king's duty of protection probably indicates that the state's attitude was not unsympathetic. Kauṭilya advises the king to exempt the peasants in a new settlement from taxation and to help them with seed, cattle and money.

The denigrating attitude of the *Dharmaśāstras* notwithstanding, it may be said that the industrial life was showing, in a general way, signs of vigour and expansion. The economic forces appear to have been too strong to be completely countered by social dogmatism.²³ Expanding external trade and the growth of national wealth not only created foreign markets for Indian products but also enlarged the scope of home market—the rise of an urban population growing richer and enjoying a degree of leisure created demand for new and luxury goods.²⁴ A stimulus was thus given to a larger range and quantity of production.

Lists of arts and crafts mentioned in the literature of our period are larger than those of the earlier age. The *Jātakas* speak only of eighteen *sippas*, the *Dīgha Nikāya* (II. 50) mentions twenty-four trades. Compared to these the *Mahāvastu*, the *Milindapañha* and the *Aṅgavijjā*²⁵ contain very long and impressive lists of trades and professions, mostly industrial. We also meet a greater degree of specialisation and division of labour during this period. For instance in the *Arthaśāstra* we find detailed description of the different kinds of works done by different categories of workers in the goldsmith's workshop. Textiles may be cited as another example of an industry that had become

highly developed with a marked degree of specialisation of skills. Not only different raw materials like cotton, silk, flax, linen, hemp, wool, etc., were extensively used,²⁶ but spinning, weaving, dyeing, etc., had all become independent skills with workers specialising in each of them. The job of the yarn-maker (*sūtrakāra*) was different from that of the weaver (*tantuvāya*).²⁷ There were fixed laws regarding the percentage of expected increase in the weight of cloth in weaving according to the types of yarns used. The silk weaver (*kosakāra*, *kosejja*) was different from the weaver of bark-fibres (*vāga*). A class, distinct from the ordinary dyers of clothes (*rajaka*), seems to have developed which specialised in dyeing only yarns (*suddarajaka*). There were even different stockists for cotton and woollen goods (*sutta vāniya*, *uṇṇa vāniya*).²⁸

All these gave a fillip to the growth of textile industry. and Bengal (Vaṅga and Puṇḍra), Banaras (Kāśī), Bihar (Magadha), Orissa (Kaliṅga), Allahabad (Vatsa), Konkan coast (Aparānta), etc., developed into flourishing centres of textile production. In a period when even the other-worldly Buddhist monks were not averse to deck themselves in silk and the wealthy folk used to wear silken garments richly decorated and embroidered with golden threads, it is natural to expect that the textile manufacturers, especially the silk weavers, were doing good business. Indian textile goods had also acquired overseas export markets in Arabia, Egypt and Roman Empire. *Dussikas* were counted among the men of substance (*sāravaṁtesu*) in the *Aṅgavijjā*.²⁹ That the financial position of the weavers guilds was considered to be very sound is indicated by the large investments

made with them. Some Nasik inscriptions of early Christian Era record investments of endowment money in industrial guilds. We find that the largest investments mentioned in these inscriptions, which amounted to 2000 *kārṣāpaṇas* each, were made with the guilds of weavers and makers of water machines (probably some sort of water wheels for irrigation). And the investment with the weavers guilds was considered so safe that the annual rates of interest charged were nine and twelve percents against the normal rate of fifteen per cent, even though the donor of the endowment belonged to the ruling house.

Although gold objects and jewellery are found sparsely in course of excavations of Indian sites—the Indian system of cremation might have been responsible for the poverty of archaeological finds in these respects—literary and sculptural evidences make it abundantly clear that the making of ornaments and objects of precious metal was a flourishing industry. Whether gold was imported from outside or India had native sources of supply cannot be determined. Besides the intriguing story of the gold-digging ants, the Classical writers also indicate that some gold was collected from river washing and from mountaneous regions. Whatever might have been the extent of supply from these indigenous sources, India seems to have got a substantial amount of bullion through trade with the Western World, especially Rome. That the country did not have a very large internal supply of precious metals is indicated by the *Arthaśāstra*, which restricted the export of precious metals and encouraged their import by abolishing custom duties on imports.³⁰

The list of substantial (*sāravaṃtesu*) traders and manufacturers in the *Aṅgavijjā*³¹ is headed by *heraṇṇika* and *suvannika*.³² Both males and females being greatly fond of ornaments, jewellers and goldsmiths naturally prospered. Over three hundred types of ornaments are mentioned in the *Aṅgavijjā* alone.³³ At least twelve inscriptions in *Lüders List* record donations made by goldsmiths and members of their families. Gifts made by jewellers (*manikāra*) are also recorded. From the *Arthaśāstra* it appears that the jewellers, goldsmiths and the dealers in precious metals were accorded favourable treatment in matters of taxation.³⁴ As wages and fees of metal workers were determined according to the value of the metal worked, the goldsmiths and jewellers received quite high wages.³⁵ That the profession of goldsmith was a lucrative one and that fashioning of ornaments and articles of precious metals was an important industry may be safely concluded from the available evidences. The industry was considered to be so profitable and important that the *Arthaśāstra* asked the state to have its own workshop of gold and also to maintain a strict control over private goldsmiths.

Setting of pearls and stones on ornaments was an old art in India. It has been suggested that the art of incrustation originated in India.³⁶ During the early centuries of Christian Era Indian pearls were in very great demand in the Roman marts. Pearl-fishing became an important industry, especially in the South Indian coastal regions. Gems, diamonds and a large variety of other precious stones were also obtained from a number of places. Pliny wrote

that India produced more gems and precious stones than any other country. Large varieties of gems are found mentioned in Indian literature also. Gems and precious stones were obviously an important item of trade in the internal market too and this is why every member of the Vaiśya *varṇa* was expected to be well versed in the respective value of different kinds of gems according to Manu.³⁷ *Saṃjukāraka*, a class of important merchants mentioned in the *Aṅgavijjā*, according to the interpretation of V. S. Agrawala, was dealers in gems.³⁸

Habits of luxury encouraged the growth of another industry, the making of perfumes, unguents and cosmetics. Cosmetics and perfumes were liberally used by both sexes.³⁹ That the city people paid quite a bit of attention to cosmetics and toiletries is also proved by the excavations at Kauśāmbī. Out of the forty-six miscellaneous stone objects discovered at the site (excavations during 1949-50) all except one were cosmetic-caskets made of steatite.⁴⁰ A large variety of scented oils, fragrant pastes and powders, and dyes for colouring of lips and feet were produced to meet the demands of fashion. The *Aṅgavijjā* in connection with the enumeration of flora mentions different types of scented juices and perfumed oils. Juices were extracted from *guggula*, *sajjalasa*, *ikkāsa*, *siriveṭṭhaka*, *caṇḍana*, *telavaṇṇika*, *kāleyaka*, *sahakāra*, *mātuluṅga*, *karamaṇḍa*, *sālaphala*, etc. Oils were made from *kusumbha*, *atāsī*, *rūcikā*, *karañja*, *bilva*, *usaṇī*, *vallī*, *sāsava*, *putikarañja*, *sigguka*, etc.⁴¹ Some of these oils were edible, but a large number of them were used for grooming. Some areas seem to have attained distinction for making special grades of oils—

certain brands are named after the area of their production.⁴² We may note here in parenthesis that oil pressing was a flourishing industry and that oilmen sometimes formed prosperous and powerful guilds. The importance of perfumeries and allied industries for state revenue is amply demonstrated by the space and care devoted by Kauṭilya to detailing the various characteristics and relative merits of different varieties of fragrant materials. The prosperity of the perfumers (*gandhika*) is also indicated by the records of donations made by them.

Fashion and luxury, thus were the patrons of some of the major industries of the period. To repeat once again the statement in the *Aṅgavijjā*, which succinctly summarises the economic position of the traders and manufacturers, the substantial members of the class were *heraṇṇika-suvannika* (goldsmiths), *caṇḍana* (dealers in sandal wood), *dussika* (textile dealers), *saṃjukāraka* (dealers in gems?) and *devaḍa* (dealers in images of Gods).⁴³ The impression is further strengthened by Manu who asked a Vaiśya to make himself thoroughly conversant with the respective values of a few articles.⁴⁴ The list of articles is interesting because it indicates that Manu considered a knowledge of the articles specified to be of special importance for a Vaiśya (obviously for the purpose of trade). The listed articles are gems, pearls, coral, metals, textiles, perfumes and condiments. The list clearly puts primacy over articles of luxury rather than over those of necessity. That fashion and luxury were feeding some of the major industries is an indication of the general prosperity of the people. The assumption

is also perhaps borne out by the votive inscriptions of the period—we find such commoners like gardener, labourer and domestic attendant making gifts.⁴⁵

Other industries also thrived. Mining and metallurgy occupied important place in the economy—the *Arthaśāstra* devotes a full chapter on these alone. Iron was of course the most important of the metals and the blacksmith was a vital factor in the economy. Iron objects excavated in Indian sites are perhaps not very varied and do not represent Indian craftsmanship at its best, but the finds cannot be described as poor either, especially if we bear in mind the damages that time can do to iron objects.⁴⁶ According to a few scholars India had a poor supply of copper, tin and lead and these had to be imported from the West as testified by the *Periplus*. Adhya has, however, adduced arguments to show that copper was mined in Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan from ancient time.⁴⁷ Whatever the source for obtaining metals might have been—indigenous mines or foreign imports—metalwork of a diverse kind was practised. Medical treatises of Caraka and Suśruta refer to tongue-scrappers and surgical instruments of various metals; and bowls of iron, tin, lead and brass are mentioned in the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra*.⁴⁸ Metal workers seem to have constituted an important element of industrial population.⁴⁹ Braziers in the Junnar formed an important and powerful guild.⁵⁰ Besides, various other craftsmen like lacquer worker (*jatukāra*), utensil maker (*taṭṭhakāra*), blacksmith (*lohakāra*), potter (*kumbhakāra*), bronzesmith (*kāmsakāra*), umbrella maker (*chattakāraka*), shell worker (*saṃkhakāra*),

brick maker (*idḍakāra*), leather worker (*cammakāra*), etc., are mentioned in the *Aṅgavijjā*.⁵¹

About the organisation of industry, the scanty evidences that we have suggest that the period witnessed a greater regimentation of industrial life and a decline in the freedom and status of craftsmen and artisans. On the one hand there was the rise of state capitalism—the state itself was a large scale producer and manufacturer with monopolistic rights of producing certain goods, especially those connected with mining and metallurgy—and on the other, the growth of private capitalists and industrial magnates. Consequently a large number of artisans who were formerly masters of their own concerns were reduced to the position of wage-earners. Employment of artisans in the state owned workshops is referred to in the *Arthaśāstra*.⁵² Artisans working in the employment of large scale manufacturers and the artisans working with their own capital seem to have been distinguished by Kauṭilya. It is quite likely that the threat to their independence and financial interests led the craftsmen to form guilds. Guilds gave them the advantages of collective bargaining and the capacity to face the competition of big industrialists on the one hand and state capitalism on the other, a thing which would be impossible to do at individual level.

Guilds not only provided protection to their members, according to the *Arthaśāstra* guild stood guarantee to customers on behalf of member artisans, but also enjoyed some measure of authority over them.⁵³ The power and place of guilds in public life can be gauged from the fact that some of the guilds seem to have authority to issue

coins. Seals of some of these corporate business organisations have been discovered from a few places. Such was the financial solvency of the guilds that even royal donors deposited money with them. Executive heads of guilds were important figures in political life and were consulted by the king on important occasions.⁵⁴

But the formation of guilds also put a restraint on individual initiative. "All in all there does not seem to be much scope left for private enterprise and industry. . . There are in the first place, those who are called *kārūśasitrs*, who appear to be master artisans employing a number of artisans to do the actual work. . . There are, on the other hand, *śavittakārūs*, who appear to be artisans working independently with their own capital and in their own workshops. In the latter case, the guild to which the artisan must be supposed to belong, is to stand guarantee to the customer for loss, damage, etc., caused by the artisan."⁵⁵

Normally wages of artisans were not high.⁵⁶ It is natural, therefore, that they sometimes put organised and united pressure on employers and traders to raise the margin of their earnings. Even the formation of labour union (*śaṁghabhṛta*) was not unknown.⁵⁷ It also appears that the traders who were engaged in selling goods reaped greater advantage of the economic growth of the period than the producers. Although the law permitted traders five per cent profit on indigenous and ten per cent on imported goods.⁵⁸ they adopted a number of tactics to evade and overstep the law. The traders often combined together to bring down the wages of artisans and craftsmen

and made excessive profits by hoarding and creating glut. "traders, joining together and raising or lowering (the prices of) goods, make a profit of one hundred *paṇās* on one *paṇa* or of one hundred *kumbhas* on one *kumbha*".⁵⁹ It will not be an unreasonable assumption that a kind of economic struggle was also going on between the artisans and traders which greatly influenced the industrial climate of the period.⁶⁰

Beneath the instability of political history and shifting fortunes of the regional and dynastic kingdoms of the post-Mauryan period if one is to look for a unifying factor for the sub-continent, one has to look towards trade. The Mauryan Empire by bringing in practically the whole of the country under a single administrative unity established better means of communications between various parts of the Empire, and thus provided a sound basis for the growth of trade. Moreover, a direct contact was established with the Western World—a contact which became even closer during the Indo-Greek, Kuṣāṇa and Śaka periods. The result was a marked extension in trade and commerce, both internal and foreign.

Descriptions of cities as important trading centres are often met with. Sāgala was one such emporium according to the *Milindapañha*.⁶¹ The bustling mart at Ujjayinī was crowded with buyers and sellers from Śaka, Yavana, Tuṣāra (Tokharians), Persian countries; and from Magadha, Kalinga, Vanga, Cola, Cera, Pāṇḍya; from mountains, islands, coasts and deserts.^{61a} Market towns of western India Paithāna, Tagara, Suppāra, Calliena (Ter, Sopāra, Kalyāṇa) etc., have been mentioned in the *Periplus*.

A dependable means of communication is an essential pre-requisite for the growth of trade and India was well served by the existence of trade routes from very early period. That chains of caravan routes linked different parts of the country is clear from Buddhist literature. System of communication vastly improved during the Mauryan period—a royal road was built up by Candragupta Maurya connecting Puṣkalāvātī with Pāṭaliputra and running further to the east on to the mouths of the Ganges. This road, it appears, lay along the great northern route, the famous *Uttarāpatha*. This high way was joined at several points by branch roads. The details of these subsidiary routes cannot be worked out.⁶² • It is, however, clear that a series of such routes criss-crossed the country linking various trade centres—the focus being the Gangetic valley where routes from different directions converged together. The important termini were Bhṛgukaccha (Broach), Paṭala and Barbaricum (in the Indus delta), Puṣkalāvātī (Carsadda) and Tāmralipti (Tamluk, Bengal coast).

There was also an active coastal trade. The *Milinda-pañha* refers to ship owners visiting Sind, Surat, Coromandal coast and Bengal.⁶³ A list of important ports and nearby marts has been compiled on the basis of the accounts in the *Periplus* and the *Geography* of Ptolemy. Beginning from the Indus delta these were Barbaricum, Barygaza, Sopāra, Calliena, Semyllaa (Caul), Naura (Cannarore or Mangalore), Tyndis (Ponnani or Kadalundi near Beypore), Muziris (Cranganore), Nelycanda (near Kottayam), Colchi (Korkei), Camara (Kaveripattam), Poduca (Pondicherry or Arikamedu), Kontakassyla (Ghantasala), Pityndra (Pithumda)‘

Paloura (Dantapura in Kalīṅga), Gange and Tamalites (both on the lower Ganges; Tamalites is Tāmralipti i.e., Tamluk). Navigable rivers were also plied. From Campā to Vārāṇasī there was a regular river traffic. According to Strabo even seagoing large vessels went up the Ganges far inside the country at least up to Palibothra. Water traffic was obviously an important means of transport; a controller had to be appointed to look after shipping and navigation.^{63a} The *Aṅgavijjā* gives us a list of different types of boats in use. *Nāva* and *pota* were large vessels, while *koṭṭimba*, *sālikā*, *saṁghāḍa*, *plāva* and *tappaka* were middle sized boats. *Kaṭṭho* and *velu* (probably made of bam boo), *tumba* and *kumbha* were small boats. Air-filled skin-boats (*dati*) were also used probably by the fishermen. *Trappage* and *cotymba*, identifiable with *Tappaka* and *koṭṭimba* of the *Aṅgavijjā*, according to the *Periplus* were large boats and plied on the sea. Another type of boats called *sangara* described as very large in the *Periplus* might have been the same as *saṁghāḍa*. *Nāva* and *pota*, we may conclude, were really large ships and were perhaps used for sea voyages.⁶⁴

Maritime activities and sea voyages were features of life of coastal India from a very early period. The excavation at Lothal of the dockyard and certain seals at Baharin prove the existence of a lively maritime relation between the Gujarat coast and the Persian Gulf and probably even beyond during the Harappan period. It is a proven fact that the history of India's trade with the Western World goes back to extreme antiquity. Mauryan policy of friendship with the Hellenistic states encouraged a further growth

of this trade. Discovery of monsoon by Hippalus in the second half of the first century B. C. or the first half of the first century A. D. greatly reduced the danger and the time that the coastal journey from the Red Sea to western India involved. The Ptolemies, particularly Philadelphus, took measures to improve commercial relations with India.

The expansion of the Roman Empire to Egypt and western Asia and the measures taken by the Roman Emperors to improve commercial relations with India—Trajan's improvement of the canals between the Nile and the Red Sea is an example—initiated a very bright period of Indian foreign trade with the Western World. The *Hou-Han-Shu* states that Vima Kadphises after conquering India started trade with the Roman Orient. A number of Indian embassies visited Rome. The missions might have been prompted by trade interests. It is not unlikely that some kind of commercial treaties were signed between the Roman and Indian powers.⁶⁵ Kuṣāṇa gold coins were discovered in a cemetery in northern Ethiopia.⁶⁶ There were Indian settlements in Dioscorida (Socotra). Indian traders in large number used to visit Aden regularly. Existence of Indian settlements at the famous trade centres of Alexandria and Berenice is indicated by archaeological and literary evidences. Foreign settlers and merchants are mentioned in certain inscriptions at Nagarjunikonda, Nasik, Karle and Junnar in India. Obviously there was a two-way traffic between India and the Mediterranean world.

Following the *Periplus* and Pliny's *Natural History* four successive stages of the development of sea routes from the Red Sea to Indian coast have been demarcated. In the first

stage voyages were made along the coast from Arabia to the Indus delta ; in the second from the Arabian coast direct by the sea to the mouths of the Indus ; in the third and fourth from the Arabian coast to the Konkan and the Malabar ports respectively. Even though the largest number of Roman coins have been discovered from South India, the ports on the Indus delta and Gujarat coast also handled a substantial volume of India's western trade. The record of Indian mariners in the eastern ocean was even brighter. India's commercial relations with South-East Asia started long before the Christian Era. Unobstructed by such competitors as the Arabians and the Romans in the West, Indian trade with South-East Asia assumed very large proportions in the closing centuries of the pre-Christian and the early centuries of the Christian Era. Such works as the *Mahāniddesa*, *Avadānaśataka*, *Brhatkathāmañjarī*, *Bṛhatkathā Śloka Saṃgraha* are replete with stories of the great exploits of Indian merchants and navigators in the Indian Ocean. Ships sailed from TAMILIAN ports, Andhra coasts and the Ganges delta for Burma, Malaya Peninsula, Java (*Suvarṇabhūmi*, *Suvarṇadvīpa*, *Yavadvīpa*), etc. Voyages were sometimes made even beyond the East Indies to China.

After the discovery of Hippalus, sea routes began overshadowing the land routes. Nevertheless, the land routes still held great importance for India's external commerce, especially for that with the Western World. The famous *Uttarāpatha* proceeded beyond Puṣkalāvātī through the Khyber Pass and the Kabul valley to Bactria and joined the main transit trade routes between India, China, Central

Asia and the Mediterranean world. One of the three highways passed through Merv, Hecatompylos, Seleucia up to Antioch. There were two other routes to western Asia from the Indus valley through Bolan Pass, Seistan and Carmania to Seleucia. The third route passed through Makran valley and Baluchistan and southern Persia. Of these three the first one was more frequently used by the traders because the other two were comparatively hazardous and not very hospitable. We have already referred to the cultural relations between India and Central Asia. There was commercial relation between the two also. Central Asia was connected with India through the Oxus valley. In fact, quite a few of the routes between India and China passed through Central Asia. The main route proceeded from Puruṣapura through the Hindukush to Bactria. From Bactria there were three routes leading to the Tarim Basin. The most popular one ran across the Pamir through Alai valley and thence to the head waters of the river Kashgar and onwards. Another more northerly route crossed both the Oxus and Jaxartes via Sogdiana, Tashkent, Lake Issi Kol and finally reached the north-west of the Tarim Basin. The third which was the southern-most went from Bactria via Badkhsan and the Pamirs into Sari Kol and then through difficult hilly tracks and gorges reached the Tarim Basin. There was also a much shorter and a direct but difficult route from Kashmir along the Gilgit and Yasin to Kashgar and then onward to China. There were land routes between India and China from Assam, Bengal and Manipur via lower Burma, Arakan and Upper Burma to Yunnan and Szechwan. These routes enabled India to

carry on large scale trade with both the Eastern and the Western World.

Let us briefly deal with the important Indian exports and imports of the period under discussion. The exports to the Western World, as can be gathered from Pliny, the *Periplus*, etc., included plant, animal and mineral products. Cardamom, cinnamon, nard, pepper, ginger-grass, citron, rice, lentil, cotton, banana, mango, sesame oil and seeds were exported. Spices, especially pepper and cinnamon, were in great demand and valued also for their medicinal properties. Textile goods, cotton and silk products, both Chinese and Indian pearls, gems, ivory, etc., had so much captured the fancy of the fashionable class in Rome that the Roman authors lamented that India was not only draining Rome off gold but also corrupting the habits of her people. From the West mostly manufactured goods were imported. Glass products, jewellery, metal objects, fancy potteries, textiles of various kinds, wines, etc., were the more important incoming items.⁶⁷ Although India exported to China some quantity of pearls, rare stones, sandalwood, perfumes and some other sundry goods, the main item that sustained the trade between the two countries was Chinese silk. A large part of the Chinese silk supply to the outside world came to be transported through India. The *Periplus* (64) tells us that Chinese silk was brought through Bactria to Barygaza and by way of the Ganges—presumably by the Yunnan-Burma-Assam route—to the Coromandal coast, obviously for re-exporting it to the outside world. India thus acted as middleman between China and Western World in the silk trade and derived from it great

economic benefit. Similarly, India imported mainly spices from the South-East Asian countries and exported them back to the West to meet its ever-increasing demands. South-East Asia also probably provided an alternative market after Roman Emperors, especially Vespasian, stopped the flow of Roman gold. Speaking generally, the balance of trade was favourable to India. Her exports to the Western World exceeded her imports. Even though in relation to China and South-East Asia, India was more of an importing than an exporting country, she did not suffer loss because the goods imported were re-exported to the West.

Indian writers had a low opinion of trade and traders. Traders have been likened to rogues and thieves and state officials were asked to be ever vigilant against their tricks.⁶⁸ The importance of trade for the society was, however, recognised and appreciated. The *Arthaśāstra* and the *Smritis* show concern for the protection of traders' interests. Trade routes were to be maintained safe from the ravages of thieves, brigands and unscrupulous state officials.⁶⁹

India's expanding commerce, particularly with foreign countries, aided by the growth of industries as well, led to a great economic advancement of the country. It appears that the section which derived greatest advantage from this economic growth was the traders, even more than the manufacturers. We are not in a position to determine the price level and the economic condition of the ordinary people. But it appears that the exchange value of the gold coins was pretty high towards the closing parts of our period, as with two, three or four dinaras one *kulyavāpa* of land amounting to a large area could be bought or from the

interest of a deposit of sixteen or twenty-five dinaras the upkeep of a small monastery could be met. But with barely a copper coin as the daily wage of an unskilled labourer, the life of the poor could have been anything but happy. Despite the state's taking of measures for control over trade and industry, the fixing of price, wages, rates of interest and profit, the amount and percentage of taxation, the traders often had recourse to corrupt practices to earn greater profit. Whatever the circumstances or the means adopted might have been, the traders in consequence of their rise in wealth also rose up the social ladder.

There is evidence of economic growth that characterised the period ; gold coins were struck for the first time in India during this period, and there are glowing tributes to the riches of India by Dio Chrysostom and Pliny. However, this was not an unmixed social blessing. The growth of wealth must have unsettled many of the older values of life. Many were doubtlessly attracted to the call of Mammon, and leaving their traditional professions were adopting more gainful ones. Patañjali⁷⁰ refers to the tendency to grow rich quickly without effort which must not have been too uncommon in an age of great economic development. Life was becoming hard and competitive. Not a few were adopting beggary as their means of livelihood. Vagrancy and larceny were not unknown.⁷¹ It cannot be without significance that the *Smṛtis* devoted considerable space and attention to the enumeration of the rules of conduct for each caste during the 'time of distress.' In the *Milindapañha*, in reply to king Milinda's question, whether all who joined the monastic order were motivated by religious yearning

alone, Nāgasena answered, "Certainly not, Sire. Some for those reasons but some have left the world in terror at the tyranny of kings. Some have joined us to be safe from being robbed, some harrassed by debt, some perhaps to gain a livelihood."⁷² The answer is revealing. All these appear to be the consequences of a developing economy.

CHAPTER II

BRĀHMAṆAS

Theoretically the society was divided into four *varṇas* or categories ; the Brāhmanas, the Kṣatriyas, the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras. The *varṇa* system with its concomitant, the *Jāti vyavasthā* was already a well-known and established institution.¹ The systematizing Hindu mind was long busy to find a rationale and justification for the social divisions from a remote past. Various theoretical explanations were offered for the origin and development of the system in numerous branches of our literature. In our period also, we find several such attempts. Mainly these are variations of the *Vedic* theory of *varṇa* as enshrined in the Puruṣa Sūkta. The *Manusmṛiti* and *Śāntiparvan* repeat the theory of the creation of the four *varṇas* by the Puruṣa from his mouth, arms, thigh and feet. Various other explanations, often displaying a great deal of ingenuity, are also found. The *Mahābhārata*, e. g., says that originally there was only one *varṇa*. Later on, four divisions arose, each with a distinct complexion ; the Brāhmaṇas, white (*sita*), the Kṣatriyas, red (*lohita*), the Vaiśyas, yellow (*pīta*) and the Śūdras, dark (*asita*), according to the propensity and occupation followed by each order. Further degeneration took place as some fell from their prescribed conduct and took the lower professions. Thus arose *Rākṣasas*, *Pretas* and the *Mlecchas*, etc. But these repeated attempts at theorising only make obvious what was intended to be

concealed. Theoreticians and law givers were finding it increasingly difficult to explain the existence of a multiple of communities which had found place in the Hindu body-social through a clear cut theory of four divisions with appointed functions for each order.

Our authors, at least some of them, were fully alive to the problem. They recognised the inadequacy of the theory of the four *varṇas* emanating from the limbs of Puruṣa for explaining the entire social order. In the *Śāntiparvan* king Janaka asked Parāśara the rather awkward question that if the entire mankind sprang from the same forefather how the offspring differed from each other and constituted four different *varṇas*? The sage had no real answer for this; he sought to gloss over the difficulty by attributing the difference to the fact that they sprang up from four different parts of the body of the *Puruṣa*. Finding the explanation incomplete the sage then fell on the theory of intermixture of *varṇas* to account for the various other special groups. That the problem was encountered from quite an early period is clear from the repeated references to mixture of *varṇas* and the resulting emergence of the new social groups in the *Dharmasūtras*. The grand finale to the theory of intermixture of *varṇas*, offering to explain the evolution of the multitude of *Jātis*, was of course left to Manu. These various theories put forward by the succeeding generations of Brahmanical authors to explain the social order indicate anxious attempts on the part of the theoreticians to keep pace with the changing patterns of the society, its growing complexity. The gap between the theory and practice was sought to be bridged by continuous modifications and

broadening within the orthodox limits of the original nucleus of the traditional theory of the *Purusasūktā*. Yet, it remains extremely doubtful if the gap was ever effectively bridged.²

The fourfold division of the society, though by no means an accurate or complete representation of the society, was, however, far from unreal and was widely accepted.³ Even the Buddhists and the Jains recognised this division. Prof. Rhys Davids' remark that "it is no more accurate to speak of caste at the Buddha's time in India than it would be to speak of it as an established institution at the same time, in Italy or Greece"⁴ need no longer be accepted.

The theoretical aspect of the social order during our period is best represented in the *Smṛtis* of Manu and Yājñavalkya. More or less similar in tone are the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya and the *Śāntiparvan*.

In the social order the supremacy of the Brāhmaṇa was unquestioned, as far as these works are concerned. His was the most privileged position. Among the mortals there is none equal to him. Springing from the mouth of Brahmā 'he is by right the lord of these whole creation.' On account of his most excellent origin he is entitled to every thing in this world. "The Brāhmaṇa eats but his own food, wears but his own apparel, bestows but his own in alms, other mortals subsist through the benevolence of the Brāhmaṇas." Irrespective of his virtue, accomplishments or occupation a Brāhmaṇa is to be treated as a veritable god. According to Patañjali even when a Brāhmaṇa failed in his spiritual and religious duties appropriate to his *varṇa*, birth alone entitled him a place in his social group.⁵ There were

special rules for his betrothal, initiation and burial. The period of impurity prescribed for him was shortest.⁶

Apart from these he enjoyed other privileges of more material consequences. Killing of a Brāhmaṇa was a moral sin. He was under no circumstances to be executed; banishments, and fines were thought to be quite adequate punishments. Even for the payment of fines he was granted special treatment—a Kṣatriya, a Vaiśya and a Śūdra unable to pay a fine was to discharge the debt by labour, a Brāhmaṇa was to pay it by instalments as he earned it. The rate of interest to be charged on debt was also graduated according to the order of the *varṇas*—the Brāhmaṇa had to pay the lowest rate. According to the *Arthaśāstra* Brāhmaṇas were exempted from payment at ferries, pickets, etc. A Brāhmaṇa's property was considered to be inviolable, it could not be confiscated even by the state. In case of failure of all heirs the property of the members of three other *varṇas* escheated to the state, but in case of a Brāhmaṇa's property it was to be distributed among the fellow members of his *varṇa*. The king under no circumstances was to levy taxes on the *śrotriyas*. If a treasure was found by a Brāhmaṇa he could keep the whole of it, if others found it the Brāhmaṇa was to be given a share, sometimes as big as a half. In order to complete a sacrifice, a Brāhmaṇa could forcibly appropriate the property of others, especially that of the Vaiśyas and Śūdras. It is clear from the above that the Brahmanical law givers seem to have been very keen to sanctify the life and property of the Brāhmaṇas.

At the same time the *Smṛtis* exhort the Brāhmaṇas,

almost endlessly, to lead a life of Spartan simplicity and discipline. The rules of conduct prescribed for the *snātakas* were highly rigorous. These rules, if practised during the formative years of studenthood, would to a very large extent shape the future mode of living of the Brāhmana adult. The *snātaka* is told repeatedly by Manu to cultivate the virtues of contentment, self-control and righteousness. He is to perform his daily rites without failure and to study the *Vedas* with unflinching devotion and regularity. He is to avoid frivolity and amusements like singing, dancing, etc. He is to be extremely careful in matters of accepting food and gifts.⁷

Care was taken to make a distinction between the duty (*dharma*) of the twice-born, which was common for all the three *varṇas*, and what they were allowed to do to make a living (*ājīvanārtham*). "...the twice-born are vigorously characterized as alike in virtue of a threefold common duty; study, sacrifice, and gift (*adhyayanam iḥyā dānam*, Gaut. X. 3), i. e., to study the sacred texts, offer sacrifices, and give to the Brāhmanas. They differ in their sources of income, which correspond to *optional* activities or occupations; in this field, the Brāhmaṇa has the privilege of teaching, performing sacrifices, and receiving gifts, the Kshatriya of protecting all creatures, the Vaishya of living from the land, commerce, grazing and usury (Gaut., Ibid.)"⁸ The same occupations were prescribed for the Brāhmaṇas in the texts of our period: "teaching, studying, sacrificing for himself, sacrificing for others, making gifts and receiving them." Sacrificing for others, teaching and accepting of gifts were his special means of livelihood. He was,

however, not to accept gift from every-body or to sacrifice for all and sundry. He was not to sacrifice for a Śūdra. He was also forbidden to teach for a stipulated fee. All that he could economically gain from this profession were the voluntary presents made by the students at the end of their student career. Although teaching, accepting gifts and sacrificing for others were special prerogatives of the Brāhmaṇas and other classes were forbidden to follow these, it is inconceivable that the entire *varṇa* could subsist well on these alone. It is pretty clear that the *Smṛtis* did not expect the economic lot of the Brāhmaṇas to be ordinarily very attractive. Hence, the sermonising about the virtues of plain living and high thinking.

The simple life devoted to religious and intellectual pursuits, without economic and political power, could hardly satisfy every member of the Brāhmaṇa class. Many were thus adopting more gainful professions and the number of such persons could not have been negligible. They, in their turn, must have exerted some amount of influence on the thinking of the community. This possibly explains the curious contradiction one notices in the *Smṛtis* regarding the occupation, duties and livelihood of the Brāhmaṇas—extolling non-attachment to wealth and contentment on the one hand and an attempt to secure economic and political privileges of a diverse kind on the other. The pressure of economic consideration had broken through the supposed occupational exclusiveness of different *varṇas*. Already during the Sūtra period the Brāhmaṇas were earning by methods appropriate to administrators and commercial folk. "Doubtless some Brahmins preserved a sense of shame if

they were acquiring by 'service' that is to say employment under direction whether in agriculture or industry—a method traditionally believed appropriate to Śūdras."⁹ Pulled by the considerations of prestige on the one hand and the desire for economic betterment on the other, the Śāstras were led to develop various covers and theories: methods of acquisition consistent with *dharma*, accepting gifts from virtuous people alone (*sat-pratigraha*) and later even the concept of 'pure' and 'impure' wealth.¹⁰ Such statements that property without a 'clear-and-pure' title was not property at all are also found. At the same time the importance of wealth even for the performance of religious acts was also realised by the *Smṛtikāras*.¹¹ We have already referred to the keenness to sanctify the property of the Brāhmaṇas by our law givers while such claims have rarely been made for the property of other classes in these works. In order to get a complete picture we might now look into the economic advantages claimed for the Brāhmaṇas in slightly greater detail.

Our authors are never tired of repeating the great merit of gifts to worthy Brāhmaṇas. In the Kali age liberality—mainly to the Brāhmaṇas—alone is the virtue. All sorts of rewards in this life and the next are assured to the givers of gifts. And the gift could range from water, clarified butter, food and clothes to cow, better if with gold coated horns and silver coated hoofs, gold and land. The king is especially urged to obtain spiritual and religious merits by liberal gifts to the Brāhmaṇas. But in fairness to our authors, it must be pointed out that they censor the unworthy greedy Brāhmaṇas very severely—an unworthy

recipient of gift is said to be destined to pass on to hell along with the indiscreet giver. An episode in the Jain *Uttarādhyaṇa Sūtra* sheds some light on the question of the Brāhmaṇa's right to accept gifts. The episode narrates how a Jain mendicant once on his begging tour approached the enclosure of a wealthy Brāhmaṇa performing sacrifice. When the mendicant asked for food he was insulted and humiliated. The Brāhmaṇa told the mendicant ; "All the world knows that we are (as it were) the fields on which the gifts sown grow up as merit ; Brāhmaṇas of pure birth and knowledge are the blessed fields." Thus the mendicant had no right to food or gift. The Jain point of view on the question is expressed by the reply given to the Brāhmaṇa that, "those who are full of anger and pride, who kill, lie, steal and own property, are Brāhmaṇas without pure birth and knowledge ; they are very bad fields."¹² It is clear thus that Brāhmaṇa's right to accept gifts was recognised by the Jains too, but they would extend this right only to the deserving and pious Brāhmaṇas and not to the greedy ones.

The question of gifts, especially the royal gifts, brings us to a very vexed problem of the extent of tax relief granted to the Brāhmaṇas. Even if dying with want a king was not to levy tax on the *śrotriya*s, laid down Manu. It appears that the exemption was sought not for the Brāhmaṇas as a class, but only for the learned *śrotriya*s. Vasiṣṭha's view on the matter is not clear. At one place he exempts all Brāhmaṇas from taxation but at another he exempts only the *śrotriya*s. Āpastamba and Brihaspati also exempt only the *śrotriya*s and not all the Brāhmaṇas. The *Śāntiparvan*

makes a clear distinction between the pious Brāhmaṇas who were to be exempted from taxation and the ordinary ones who were not to be granted this privilege. The *Arthaśāstra* recommended gifts of land to priests, preceptors and others, which were to pass in inheritance to persons belonging to the same category. Such lands were distinguished from tax-paying lands.¹³ In spite of Megasthenes' statement that the Brāhmaṇas and philosophers paid no taxes, and Viṣṇu's assertion that no tax was to be raised on the Brāhmaṇas, it appears that not every member of the *varṇa* was immune from the levies.¹⁴ The same was the case with the king's duty to look after the welfare of the Brāhmaṇas. Only a few learned ones, and not every Brāhmaṇa, could expect to be provided with subsistence from the state exchequer. Any way this much is clear that in the *Smṛtis* the Brāhmaṇas are found to be claiming a number of economic privileges.

Turning from the economic to the political sphere we notice more or less the same tendency. The appointment of the royal *purohita* is considered to be one of the most important functions of the king. Though Manu speaks only about the religious functions of the *purohita*—the performance of king's domestic rites and sacrifices—the office was surely not devoid of political power. That Yājñavalkya makes a thorough knowledge of the theory of punishment (*daṇḍanīti*) an essential qualification for the office speaks for itself.¹⁵ The *Arthaśāstra* is very clear on the point. It asks the king to follow the *purohita* as a 'pupil does his teacher, a son his father or a servant his master.' Even though the *purohita* was perhaps not a

member of the state council, his very special kind of personal relationship with the king was sure to give his office great political power and influence. In the council of ministers the Brāhmaṇas seem to have a substantial representation though neither Kauṭilya nor Manu nor Yājñavalkya specify the *varṇa* of the persons to be appointed ministers—they emphasise only noble birth and other statesmanlike qualities. There can be no doubt that suitable persons from all ranks were appointed ministers. But Manu makes a Brāhmaṇa among the minister the most important, we might call him the prime minister, though Manu does not give him any special name. The king is advised to confer with him in all important state affairs and to follow his counsels. "The kings in Kālidāsa's 'Mālavikā' and 'Śakuntalā' do actually consult with a minister over certain questions—in 'Mālavikā' even with a council of ministers—but not especially with a learned Brāhmaṇa. On the other hand Kālidāsa's kings have a Brāhmaṇa as comic figure near them. This Jester speaks in bad dialect, is greedy, conceited, cowardly, cunning—but a true helper of his master in affairs of the heart. ...He is his minister in matters which do not concern the state, says the king in "Mālavikā."¹⁶

Another important sphere of state activity where, according to the *Smṛti* writers, the Brāhmaṇas exercised a good measure of influence was the judicial administration. According to Manu, the king while discharging justice was to be accompanied by Brāhmaṇa assessors (*sabhyas*).¹⁷ In case the king failed personally to investigate suits he was to appoint a learned Brāhmaṇa to try them. Only the learned

Brāhmaṇas (*śiṣṭas*) had the right to interpret doubtful points of law. Whether the Brāhmaṇas or the king enjoyed the legislative power is an extremely controversial and ticklish point. According to some authorities king's power of legislation was seriously limited. He could make no law overriding *dharma*. In fact royal edict was to be merely declaratory and not innovative. The Brāhmaṇas holding the power of interpretation, it appears, had an edge over the king in matters of legislation. Quoting the opinion of Medhātithi, Derrett writes, "The king is concerned with the state of the kingdom but the Brāhmaṇa with relieving people's doubts as to rights and duties. The king's concern is to administer punishment. The Brāhmaṇa's, however, is to see that the judgement is correct. This would serve to put the matter in a nutshell."¹⁸ Kautilya, however, does not refer to the presence of Brāhmaṇa assessors at the court, in fact he does not refer to the presence of assessors at all. The only definite association of the Brāhmaṇas with the department of justice in the *Arthaśāstra* seems to be confined to the provision that the witnesses were to take their oath before a Brāhmaṇa. The *Smṛti* writers, however, give the impression that the seat of the judge with the exception of the king was an exclusive province of the Brāhmaṇas. It is not clear whether this privilege was claimed only with regard to the 'civil court' and that it did not extend to the *Kaṇṭakasodhana* or 'criminal court.' Jayaswal refers to Manu IX.234 to prove that criminal courts were presided over by ministers.¹⁹ The same verse, however refers to judges (*prāḍvivāka*) along with ministers as settling cases ; and the judges were to be Brāhmaṇas.²⁰ Any way, there

can hardly be any doubt that the *Smṛtis* were claiming great juridical, and by implication political, power for the Brāhmaṇas. Though it did not confer any political power, we might here note that the *dūtas* (ambassadors) normally appear to have belonged to the Brāhmaṇa *varṇa*.

Many other privileges of diverse kinds are given to the Brāhmaṇas in the *Smṛtis*. The Brāhmaṇa was the guardian of the conduct and morality of the entire society, his was the duty to instruct others to live according to law. In the rule of right to road a Brāhmaṇa, especially a *snātaka*, was to get precedence even over a king. Punishments were usually graded according to the *varṇa* of the offender and that of the person wronged. If the offender was a Brāhmaṇa he was to be given the lowest punishment, whereas an offence against the Brāhmaṇa was to be punished most severely. We must, however, note here that for certain offences, e. g. theft, a Brāhmaṇa was to receive the highest punishment. Similarly for selling and pledging a minor, Kautilya recommends highest fines for the Brāhmaṇa. Although Gautama forbids a Brāhmaṇa to be cited as witness by a non-Brāhmaṇa litigant, Manu's prohibition in this respect, like Nārada's (*ṛiṇadāna*, verse 158), covers only the *śrotriyas* and not all Brāhmaṇas. A Brāhmaṇa alone could take wives from each of the four *varṇas*. However, in his anxiety to preserve the purity of descent Manu discouraged the Brāhmaṇa to wed a Śūdrā. Law of inheritance in such inter *varṇa* marriages, as we may well expect to find in these works, was blatantly favourable to the son by the Brāhmaṇa wife. "Among (a Brāhmaṇa's) sons from four wives belonging to the four *varṇas*, the son of the

Brāhmaṇa wife shall receive four shares, the son of the Kṣatriya wife three shares, the sons of the Vaiśya wife two shares, the son of the Śūdra wife one share."²¹ According to other rules the son of a Śūdra wife by a man of a higher order was not legally entitled to any share of his father's estate at all, he had to depend exclusively on the charity of his father.²²

Normally a Brāhmaṇa was expected to follow the special occupations of his *varṇa* viz., teaching, officiating at sacrifices and receiving gifts though these did not limit the choice of his vocations. A Brāhmaṇa alone could be a teacher though the rule admitted exceptions. In the time of distress even a Brāhmaṇa could go for instructions to teachers of other *varṇas*. To officiate at a sacrifice was an exclusive privilege of the Brāhmaṇa. But every member of the Brāhmaṇa order by virtue of birth alone was not considered competent to act as an officiating priest at a sacrifice. Only the learned *śrotriya*s had the competence and authority to officiate at a sacrifice. Then, sacrificing for the unworthy was also to be scrupulously avoided. Sacrificing for a multitude, for *gaṇas*, for *vrātya*s, for unworthy ends, etc., was severely condemned and brought social opprobrium.²³ Restrictions in the matter of accepting gifts were varied and numerous. Only when oppressed by hunger a Brāhmaṇa was to ask for gifts from a king, from his pupil or from one who was willing to offer a sacrifice. Failing to obtain gifts from the above three he might approach any other worthy *dvijāti*. A king who was not of Kṣatriya descent or transgressed the *Śāstric* rules was not to be approached for gifts. Similarly no present was to be accepted from butchers, oilmen, keepers

of liquor shops or brothels etc. In case of extreme difficulties alone, gift was to be accepted from a Sūdra. "The ideal set before the Brāhmaṇas in the matter of *pratigraha* (receiving gifts) was that he who, though entitled to accept a gift (on account of his Vedic learning and *tapas*) does not take it, attains to the highest worlds (*Yāj.* I. 213)." ²⁴ Rules regarding the acceptance of foods were equally strict. A Brāhmaṇa was not to accept food given by a harlot, a thief, a usurer, one accused of mortal sin, an unchaste woman, an ungrateful man, an informer, a habitual liar, seller of rewards for sacrifices, nor the food given by a musician, a carpenter, a physician, a hunter, a blacksmith, a stageplayer, a goldsmith, a basketmaker, a dealer in weapon, trainer of hunting dogs, a washerman, a dyer. Food was not to be accepted if offered without respect. With so many restrictions there was little scope for an easy life of getting free food and gifts.

It was not possible for a whole *varṇa* to subsist economically on teaching, sacrificing, accepting of gifts, especially as all these were hemmed in by several restrictions and could hardly be adopted as stable means of livelihood. Naturally many Brāhmaṇas were forced to take up other professions. The attitude of the *Smṛtikāras* to this problem was highly realistic. Failing to maintain himself by the occupations peculiar to his *varṇa* a Brāhmaṇa was allowed to adopt the professions of the Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas.

Śāntiparvan and *Manu* exhort a Brāhmaṇa to take up arms in defence of *dharma* and established social order. But, even in normal times a warrior Brāhmaṇa was no abnormal sight. Brāhmaṇas were known to adopt soldiering

as a means of livelihood from an early period. Pāṇini speaks of Brāhmaṇas following the profession of arms. Baudhāyana notes that in the north the Brāhmaṇas used to take up the profession of fighting. From Kauṭilya it appears that in certain quarters the Brāhmaṇas were considered to be the best soldiers. Some of the great heroes of the Epics Droṇa, Aśvatthāmā, Kṛpā were Brāhmaṇas. In fact the greatest warrior in our Hindu tradition was a Brāhmaṇa, Paraśurāma. The case of *senāpati* Pusyamiṭra is too well known to need repetition.

In time of distress a Brāhmaṇa was allowed to follow the profession of Vaiśya, but the allowance was diluted to a large extent by the imposition of a number of restrictions. There was some divergence of opinion regarding Brāhmaṇa's right to pursue agriculture as a means of livelihood. In the Vedic period, when presumably the society was not very complex and the functional division of the society based on specialisation of labour had not gone very far, agriculture was a permissible occupation for the Brāhmaṇas as for other classes. But, the attitude towards agriculture began changing from the *sūtra* period.²⁵ Baudhāyana e.g., considers it to be an impediment for Vedic study and therefore should normally be avoided by the Brāhmaṇas. A Brāhmaṇa was, however, not altogether debarred from following agriculture. If he lived by agriculture he had to complete his labour in the field before break-fast and had to take care that no cruelty was done to his oxen. The idea behind the rule was perhaps to spare some time so that the spiritual and intellectual duties might not be completely neglected. The very next verse and the succeeding one refer to the

Brāhmaṇas' duty to perform some domestic rites and sacrifices in the *Baudhāyana Dharma Sutra*.²⁶ In spite of the intellectuals' disparagement of agriculture as a fit vocation for the Brāhmaṇas, it continued to attract quite a large number of them. This is clear from Manu. X.34. "(Some) declare that agriculture is something excellent, (but) that means of subsistence is blamed by the virtuous ; (for) the wooden (implement) with iron point injures the earth and (the beings) living in the earth." A Brāhmaṇa was allowed to engage in agriculture even personally in time of distress and in normal times if he personally did not plough the field. There can be little doubt that agriculture, either pursued personally or through paid labourers, was very often a premier means of living for many Brāhmaṇas. We may here note that among the gifts—the acceptance of gifts was a special prerogative of the Brāhmaṇas—praised in the *Smṛtis*, the gift of land occupies a very prominent place. Yājñavalkya includes land in a list of gifts which should never be refused even if offered by evil persons.

In an economy which was still predominantly agricultural, dependence on land to a certain extent was natural and even inevitable for any section of the community. But, other occupations of a Vaiśya, trade and commerce, were also allowed to a Brāhmaṇa. "But he who through want of means of subsistence, gives up the strictness in respect to his duties, may sell in order to increase his wealth, the commodities sold by Vaiśyas, making, (however,) the following exceptions."²⁷ These exceptions were : dealing in condiment of all sorts, cooked food and sesamum, stones, salt, cattle, human beings, dyed cloth, hemp, flax or wool,

even though they may not be dyed, fruits, roots and medical herbs, water, weapons, poisons, meat, *soma* and perfumes, milk, honey, clarified butter, oil, wax, sugar, *Kuśa*-grass, beasts of forest, liquor, lac, etc. The fact that the list of the articles forbidden to be sold by the Brāhmaṇas is not the same in all the works, indicates that the rules admitted a great deal of flexibility and were not very strictly applied. Baudhāyana for example notes that customs in the north approved a Brāhmaṇa trade in wool, animals and arms, etc., and says that these were sinful acts only when such forbidden occupations were practised in other countries than where they prevailed.

About money-lending and usury our authorities are more or less unanimous that this was a profession not fit to be cultivated by the Brāhmaṇas, though certain exceptions were admitted. Vaśiṣṭha and Nārada forbid Brāhmaṇas to adopt money-lending. Manu, while disapproving usury for the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas, however, relaxes the rule and allows them to lend money at a low rate of interest to 'sinful men.' Gautama would allow usury even to a Brāhmaṇa if he would practise it through an agent and not personally. We thus find that the exigencies of economic situation and local customs were too strong to be resisted by the theoreticians. That in the choice of vocations many Brāhmaṇas were guided more by economic considerations than anything else,²⁸ becomes clear from the lengthy lists of Brāhmaṇas considered unworthy to be invited to *śrāddhas*. The lists include physician, temple priest, shop keeper, paid servant of king, usurer, one who subsists by tending cattle, paid teacher, one who teaches a Śūdra, seller

of *soma*, bard, oil-man, keeper of a gambling house, maker of bows and arrows, trainer of elephants, horses etc., bird-fancier, he who teaches the use of arms, he who diverts the water courses, actor, singer, architect, messenger, breeder of sporting dogs, falconer, shepherd and many others. It is interesting to note that the *Arthaśāstra* grants a great deal of economic relief in the shape of exemption from land taxes to many of the professions specified above ; e.g., to physicians, elephant-trainers, and a number of king's officials. May be this provided an additional economic incentive why a large number of Brāhmanas disregarded the *Smṛti* rules about the forbidden occupations. Law gives moreover, had to relax these occupation rules for *āpadkāla* (time of distress) during which a very wide choice of professions was granted to the Brāhmanas. Senart had pointed out long ago that these allowances were not in actuality made for exceptional cases. "But make no mistake ; we are dealing not with an exceptional case of necessity but with perfectly ordinary case, facts thinly disguised, simply for the sake of principle, by a decent pretext, by a reservation which it is hoped may survive the shipwreck of the theory."²⁹ These rules appear to have been an attempt to rationalise the diverse modes of livelihood actually pursued by the members of the Brāhmaṇa class in consonance with the *varṇa* principle.

Turning from the *Smṛtis*, to the Buddhist and Jain literature, we find, almost against our anticipation, more agreement than difference between the two sets of evidences, the Brahmanical and the Buddhist-Jain, as far as the *varṇa* structure is concerned. The difference has often been

emphasised more than it really¹ deserved. This difference which at first sight appears as quite marked arose on account of the theorising tendency on the part of the *Smṛtis*. Stripped of its theoretical garb the picture of the *varṇa* structure in the *Smṛtis* would conform remarkably well with that in the Buddhist and Jain literatures.

Too much should not be read in the Buddhist and the Jain texts' declaration of the superiority of the Kṣatriyas over the Brāhmaṇas.²⁶ Such claim to superiority by the ruling class over the priestly order was not new or found only in the Buddhist and the Jain texts. In the *Upanisads* Kṣatriyas are often found as teachers of the Brāhmaṇas. The *Bṛihadāraṇyakaupaniṣad* in a passage expressly claims the superiority of the Ksatriyas over the Brāhmaṇas.³¹ The king as ruler was often thought to be superior to the Brāhmaṇas. But the position of the king should not be construed as reflecting the status of the whole Ksatriya *varṇa*. In spite of the counter claim to Brāhmaṇa's superiority, the majesty and grandeur of kingly power were duly recognised by the Brahmanical works also and they invested the king with divine power. Similarly the Buddhist and Jain works, although, attach an apparent superiority to the Kṣatriyas, nevertheless, contain a strong under-current of reverence to the worthy Brāhmaṇas. The word Brāhmaṇa has often been used as a title of Mahāvīra. In the *Milindapañha* the Buddha calls himself a Brāhmaṇa. Frequently in the Buddhist literature the *arhat* is equated with true Brāhmaṇa.

That the Brāhmaṇa *varṇa* enjoyed a pre-eminent position in the society, to be born a Brāhmaṇa meant a privileged

status in the social order, is proved by the great pains taken by the Jain and Buddhist writers, repeating tirelessly to drive home the fact that birth alone does not make one a Brāhmaṇa. "By one's own action one becomes a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya, or a Vaiśya, or a Śūdra."³² "Not by birth one is a Brāhmaṇa, nor is one by birth non-Brāhmaṇa."³³ Family, birth or plaited hair do not make one a Brāhmaṇa. Truth and righteousness alone are the real marks of Brāhmanhood.³⁴ In these statements made in the early Buddhist and Jain works one discerns an attempt on the part of their authors to combat a social reality which they resented. That birth determined the social status and that *varṇa* distinctions were very much real are proved by the ideal so fondly painted in some of the *Jātakas* of the next life in the world of gods, where conduct and not parentage alone shall count. The popular concept of a Brāhmaṇa, however, remained unchanged. As if lamenting the *Suttanipāta* writes "adhered for a long time are the views of the ignorant, the ignorant tells us, one is Brāhmaṇa by birth." In the same vein adds the *Uttarādhyaṇa Sūtra* (XXV.19) that he who is called by people a Brāhmaṇa and is worshipped is no true Brāhmaṇa. Any way this much is sufficiently clear that pious and worthy Brāhmaṇas commanded great respect for their intellectual and moral attainments even in the Buddhist and Jain circles.

The ideal Brāhmaṇahood described in the Buddhist literature is not far different from the same as found in the *Smṛtis*. The code of conduct prescribed for the true Brāhmaṇa in the Buddhist literature would be largely approved by the *Smṛti* writers. Same virtues, non-attach-

ment and purity of thought, are emphasised by both. Yājñavalkya defining *dharma* writes that it is not outward show that makes *dharma*, *dharma* in fact consists in truthfulness, not stealing, absence of anger, modesty, cleanliness, discrimination, courage, equanimity, the quality of subjugating the senses and knowledge.³⁵ Explaining the Indian view of *dharma* and morality Rangaswami Aiyangar said, "In the Indian view all conduct rests on a super sensible basis. This leads to a fusion of religion and morals, which is reflected in the existence of only one word in Sanskrit, viz., *dharma* for both. In modern eyes in an age in which secularism is upheld as the ideal and religion has long been ignored, such association may appear as an entanglement. The traditional Hindu view is different. Morality to have effective force must rest on supra-mundane sanctions."³⁶ And as we have hinted above no other *varṇa* was expected to follow *dharma* conceived as the sum total of conduct and morality more than the Brāhmaṇas. The Buddhists and the Jains also expected of the Brāhmaṇas same lofty conduct. It is only in their religious attitude that they really differed. While the *Smṛtis* exhort the Brāhmaṇas to perform with steadfast devotion and regularity the Brāhmaṇical religious rites—sacrifices and the study of the *Vedas*—the Buddhist works hold before him the supreme ideal of arhathood to strive for. Some remarks would hold good for the Jain view of a true Brāhmaṇa. The *Dhammapada* writes "Him I indeed call a Brāhmaṇa who does not cling to pleasures, like water on a lotus leaf, like a mustard seed on the point of a needle." "By penance, by a religious life, by self-restraint and by temperance, by this one is a Brāhmaṇa,

such a one (they call) that best Brāhmaṇa” echoes the *Suttanipāta*. The Buddhist concept of ideal Brāhmaṇhood, as found in these earlier works did not undergo much change even in the post-Mauryan period. In the *Uddālaka Jātaka* a true Brāhmaṇa is described as without land, without relations, unconcerned about the sensuous world, free from desires, immune from bad lusts, indifferent to existence ; acting thus the Brāhmaṇa attains peace of mind, for this reason one calls him virtuous. The *Milindapañha* represents the same attitude to the question as the earlier works. “A Brāhmaṇa, O King, means one who carries on the line of the tradition of the ancient instructions concerning the learning and the teaching of sacred writ, concerning the acceptance of gifts, concerning subjugation of the senses, self-control in conduct, and performance of duty.”³⁷ The Jain view of true Brāhmaṇa is similar. The twentyfifth lecture in the *Uttarādhyāyana Sūtra* is a virtual repetition of the *vāseṭṭhasutta* of the *Sutta-Nipāta* and the twentysixth chapter of the *Dhammapada*. Same premises are covered by *Acāranga Sūtra* too.³⁸

A Brāhmaṇa was expected to lead a life of intellectual and religious pursuits. A mastery of the *Vedic* literature was an indispensable pre-requisite to be counted as a proper Brāhmaṇa. The stock description of the Brāhmaṇa in the *Mahāvastu* is : a scholar learned in the *Vedas* and the traditional lore. We frequently find Brāhmaṇas proudly declaring that they attained perfection in the three *Vedas*. The *Milindapañha* writes that the business of Brāhmaṇas and their sons is concerned with the *R̥gveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Sāmveda* and the *Atharva-veda*.³⁹ At another place in

the same work a Brāhmaṇa father tells his son that the three *Vedas* are called learning (*sikkhā*) and that other kinds of knowledge are mere arts (*sippas*).⁴⁰ One does of course sometimes notice a tendency to run down the importance of the knowledge of Brahmanical lore. Nevertheless, the *Vedas* were held in great esteem. Among the accomplishments of Theṛa Nāgasena are mentioned a mastery of the three *pitakas* and the *Vedic* lore.⁴¹ The Jains while questioning the Brāhmaṇical practices refrained from challenging the *Vedas*. They only challenged the priestly Brāhmaṇa's ability to follow the true meaning of the *Vedas*. The Jains say that the Brāhmaṇa priests became pre-occupied with external formalities of religion alone forgetting the true spirit of the *Vedas*. It may not be too hazardous to assume that the Buddhists and the Jains even though they disagreed with the Vedic teaching—in consistence with their philosophy they could hardly agree with the *Vedic* religion—they did not risk popular disfavour by openly disparaging the *Vedas* which obviously commanded very great respect.

The range of the study of a learned Brāhmaṇa was not limited to the *Vedas*.⁴² Often a Brāhmaṇa is described as master of eighteen sciences besides the *Vedas*. Nāgasena is said to have been taught the *Vedas* with a knowledge of their lexicography, prosody, grammar, and legends attaching to the characters in them. He became a philologist and a grammarian and skilled alike in causty (*hetu*) and in the knowledge of the bodily marks that foreshadow the greatness of a man. At another place the subjects that a Brāhmaṇa boy should study are specified as follows: the

four *Vedas*, *itihāsa*, *purāṇas*, lexicography, prosody, phonology, verses, grammar, etymology, astrology, the six *Vedāṅgas*, arithmetic and interpretations of various omens and natural phenomena, and divination and prognostications. Anyway, a Brāhmaṇa who was a scholar and accomplished in various branches of knowledge was a much respected figure.

Brāhmaṇa teachers are frequently referred in the Buddhist and Jain literature. The Brāhmaṇa scholar teaching five hundred young Brāhmaṇa boys the *Vedic mantras* in his hermitage is a common figure in the *Mahāvastu*. The *Jātakas* speak of learned Brāhmanas, famous all over the world, as teachers. These teachers attracted a large number of students from far off places who took great pains to make long journeys to receive instructions from them. According to the *Milindapañha* Suddhodana placed his son Gautama under a Brāhmaṇa scholar Sabbamitta of distinguished western descent (*uddicca*) for schooling. Similarly Nāgasena when he came of age was put under a Brāhmaṇa for Vedic study. The Jain *Uttarādhyāyana Sūtra* speaks of Brāhmaṇa teachers who surrounded by their pupils were performing sacrifices. These leave the clear impression that the profession of teaching lay mostly in the hands of the Brāhmaṇas. According to the *Tilamuttḥi Jātaka* there were both fee paying and non-fee paying students. And the fees charged were not always very small. In the *Milindapañha*, Somuttara paid thousand pieces for his son's education.⁴⁸ So it appears that the teachers did not so scrupulously follow the *Smṛti* injunctions against the acceptance of stipulated fees. That all teachers could not

afford to, or did not care to follow the rule is clear from Manu's dictum that such Brāhmanas were not to be invited to *Śrāddhas*. The Buddhist and the Jain writers display a hostility towards Brahmanical sacrifices. A typical example is to be found in the Jain *Uttarādhyāyana Sūtra* (XIIth lecture), where a Jain monk of great piety, though born in the family of the Śvapākas (Caṇḍālas) was said to have humbled arrogant sacrificing Brāhmanas showing the worthlessness of their sacrifices. But strangely enough the Buddhists and Jains not only show the knowledge of, but also tacitly accept, some of the rights given to the Brāhmanas in the Brahmanical Law Books as performer of sacrifices. Kings used to give generous gifts to Brāhmaṇas for sacrifices. The *Somadatta Jātaka* describes how a king gave a Brāhmaṇa sixteen cows, ornaments and a village as a place of residence as *Brahmadeya*. In the *Junha Jātaka* we find another instance of gift of five rich villages, seven hundred cows, hundred slaves and ten thousand gold pieces to a Brāhmaṇa by king Junha. In the *Buddhacarita* Suddhodana is described as giving gold and cow to the Brāhmaṇas after offering oblations in the sacrificial fire.

That the Jains tacitly accepted the Brāhmaṇa's right to accept gifts has already been suggested above. There is a similar instance in the Buddhist *Milindapañha*. King Vessantara is said to have given his wife and children into slavery as gift to a Brāhmaṇa. The way the Brāhmaṇa donee is painted as dragging the tender kids is hardly flattering. Strangely enough, the king Vessantara's action is defended on the ground that no gift should be withheld if one worthy of receiving a gift was present. In the

present narrative one fails to find any worthy quality in the Brāhmaṇa to receive such a staggering gift except perhaps his birth.⁴⁴ We might here note that at another place the *Milindapañha* mentions the acceptance of gifts as one of the essential qualities of a Brāhmaṇa.⁴⁵

However, like the *Smṛtis* in the Jīno-Buddhist literature too a true Brāhmaṇa is described as one who never hankers after gift. Only those who control their senses, are free from greed and attachment, are worthy of receiving gifts. The *Dasa Brāhmaṇa Jātaka* considers the Brāhmaṇas, who forgetting their proper duties pursue gainful worldly professions, as not Brāhmaṇas at all and thoroughly unworthy to receive gifts. A reward seeking greedy Brāhmaṇa invited from the Buddhist writes as much disrespect as from the *Smṛti* writers.

Certain privileges are accorded to the virtuous Brāhmaṇas by the Buddhists also. A Brāhmaṇa's person, to certain extent, was considered to be inviolable. No one should attack a Brāhmaṇa, but the Buddhists hasten to put that if a Brāhmaṇa is attacked he should not fly at his aggressor.⁴⁶ It, however, remains doubtful whether the Buddhists recognised the legal right of the Brāhmaṇas to immunity from execution (*abādhyatā*) and molestation (*ajyeyatā*). Dr. Fick writes, "The Pāli texts know of no privileged position of the Brāhmaṇas in the eye of law; rather the statement of the *Madhura Sutta* that a criminal, whether he is a Brāhmaṇa or belongs to any other caste, would be executed, appears in a number of passages of the Jātakas where one speaks of the execution of a Brāhmaṇa (for example I. 371, 439)."⁴⁷ We might here note in passing

that even the Brāhmaṇical texts do not claim this privilege for all Brāhmaṇas without discrimination. In the *Mṛcchakatika* (IX), we find that the *varṇa* of the Brāhmaṇa accused did not prevent the judge to pass death sentence on him.⁴⁸

Cheating a Brāhmaṇa was a highly condemnable act. "Whosoever by falsehood deceives either a Brāhmaṇa or a Samana or any other mendicant, let one know him as an outcaste."⁴⁹ The sentiment is more or less parallel to the one sounded by Manu (XI. 26). "That sinful man, who through covetousness seizes the property of the gods or the property of the Brāhmaṇas, feeds in another world on the leavings of vultures." What is striking is that in both the instances we find a strong disapproval of the act but the nature of the punishments threatened in both is extra-judicial, social opprobrium in one retribution in the next world in the other.

There is hardly any doubt that normally a Brāhmaṇa would marry only within his own *varṇa*. That the Brāhmaṇas used to take pride in the purity of birth is suggested by such statements occurring frequently in the Buddhist and Jain works that birth alone does not make one a Brāhmaṇa. "The appellation 'Brāhmaṇa' O King was not given to the Blessed one by his mother, nor his father . . ."⁵⁰ Endogamy was the normal rule and marriage within one's own *varṇa* was preferred. In the *Jātakas* we find Brāhmaṇa parents giving express instructions to match-makers to find girls for their sons from Brāhmaṇa families of equal status. Exceptions are, however, known. Uddālaka, though born of a courtesan was accepted by his Brāhmaṇa father as his son and disciple. It does not seem

that a girl would be readily given in marriage if a proposal came from a higher *varṇa*. In the *Mahāvastu* we find the very interesting story of a smith who obviously thought very highly of his trade and who refused to give his daughter to a Brāhmaṇa suitor till the youth proved that his love was as great as his skill as a smith.⁵¹ In the *Bhaddasāla Jātaka* Lord Buddha says that the family of the mother does not matter, the family of the father alone is important. But this was not the popular attitude. Usually mixed marriages were looked at askance. The *Smṛtis* allowed *anuloma* marriage though rather grudgingly.

In an earlier period the Brāhmaṇas were extremely elastic and mobile, when apart from mass adoption of Kṣatriyas to their fold, the Brāhmaṇas freely married into aboriginal non-Aryan tribes and admitted persons of even unknown ancestry into their ranks, provided such persons distinguished themselves in learning, penance and other Brāhmaṇa like qualities.⁵² By our period, however, the Brāhmaṇas had crystallized themselves into smaller endogamous and then exogamous units through the systems of 'gotra' and 'pravara.' In the contemporary inscriptions we find the Brāhmaṇas frequently mentioned along with their *gotra* names. Obviously great pride came to be attached to the *gotra* lineage. The use of the *gotra-pravara* system probably had economic aspect also—an impeccable ancestry from learned sages perhaps became necessary to establish the priests competence and ability to perform sacrifice and other rituals on behalf of the clients.⁵³

A large number of Brāhmaṇas pursuing trades and professions beyond the scope of their *varṇa* duties figure

prominently in the Buddhist literature. The *Dasa Brāhmaṇa Jātaka* speaks disapprovingly of many such Brāhmaṇas who followed diverse professions. There were physicians, wagon-drivers, servants, tax-collectors, tradesmen, agriculturists, butchers, cowherds, hunters, etc. An account of these worldly Brāhmaṇas is given also in the Vāsetthasutta of the *Sutta-Nipāta*.

However, the actual attitude of the society was perhaps not so strict and the Brāhmaṇas following some of these forbidden occupations were tolerated by the society and these did not entail any social disrespect. A Brāhmaṇa agriculturist is a recurrent figure in the Buddhist literature. The *Milindapañha* describes Nāgasena's father, apparently not an entirely uncultivated man himself, as returning from his field. In the *Jātakas* we find instances of Brāhmaṇas ploughing their fields personally. There were also big Brāhmaṇa landholders who engaged slaves and labourers to work in their fields. Dr. A. N. Bose goes to the length of suggesting that agricultural lands became mostly concentrated in the hands of Brāhmaṇas during this period.⁵⁴

A rich Brāhmaṇa is a frequent character in the *Jātakas*. Some of them are described as worth eight hundred millions. Some of the Brahmana families are described as *Mahāsālakulas*, the families of great wealth and prestige. One can hardly disagree with Fick that "by these rich Brāhmaṇas, big land holders or princely merchants are to be understood, for through presents alone such enormous wealth could hardly be accumulated."⁵⁵ In the *Mahāsutasoma Jātaka* we actually come across a Brāhmaṇa merchant prince fitting out a caravan of five hundred wagons of merchandise for

sale in the west. We might here note that in the *Mṛcchakaṭika* the hero Cārudatta though born in the Brāhmaṇa family was a merchant by profession and this does not appear to have undermined his social status in any way. However, wealthy Brāhmaṇas have often been subjects of ridicule and censor in the Buddhist and Jain works.

Fick contends that "of a general control of the priestly caste over the administration no traces are to be found in the Buddhist literature."⁵⁶ But this does not appear to be fully correct. In the story of Mālinī in the *Mahāvastu* the Brāhmaṇas of the court forced the king to hand over his daughter who had enraged them by her devotion to Buddhism to be put to death. When the Brāhmaṇas made the demand the king reflected. "This land is full of Brāhmanas, overridden by them. If I do not give up Mālinī there will be a riot, and then neither Mālinī nor I will survive."⁵⁷ Even if we make allowance for some exaggeration in the episode described above, it appears that the Brāhmaṇas could be a very potent force in the court politics. There is no doubt that the office of the *purohita* was an important one and the *purohita* had some measure of influence over the king and state policy. Kings used to appoint Brāhmaṇas for performing royal sacrifices and domestic rites. Usually the sons of kings were placed under the family *purohita* for instructions. And the priest as the former teacher of king must have some influence on the king. Another class of Brāhmaṇas used to flock around the royal court, experts in interpreting dreams and signs and in prophesying the future. The art of divination and fortune telling were held in disrespect in the orthodox

Brāhmaṇical as well as in the Buddhist and Jain circles.⁵⁸ Yet this class of Brāhmaṇas claiming occult knowledge thrived on popular credulity. When Asitar went to see Gotama after his birth he "heard the report that the boy was to become a universal king, for the diviners had so foretold. But the seer thought to himself, 'This boy will not become a universal king. He will become a Buddha in the world.' For the seer saw that those marks were such as belonged not to a universal king but to a Buddha."⁵⁹ In the *Junha Jātaka* the king asked a gift seeking Brāhmaṇa whether he knew various magic incantations or could he keep the demons under control to deserve a gift? Brāhmaṇas are found following the callings of medicine in the *Jātakas*. Though disapproved by the *Smṛtis*, some Brāhmaṇas did adopt the profession. According to the *Susruta Saṃhitā* a physician could take as a pupil a son of a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya, or a Vaiśya of a good family. Although considered as an unfit vocation for a Brāhmaṇa, the physician nevertheless enjoyed great social prestige.⁶⁰ Kautilya even granted some tax relief to medical practitioners. This might have induced some Brāhmaṇas to adopt the profession of physicians. Some of the other professions the Brāhmaṇas engaged in, as found in the *Jātakas*, include cow-herding, goat-keeping, hunting, wood-work and carpentry, weaving, caravan guarding, archery, carriage-driving and snake-charming etc. And in none of these *Jātakas* there is any suggestion that the social status of these Brāhmaṇas suffered on account of their professions.

From an analysis of the foregoing evidences, inspite of their bewilderingly diverse character, one fact clearly

emerges : the *varṇa* system was a universal institution in the country and was accepted alike by the Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain sections.

What was the position of the Brāhmaṇa in the society ? An attempt to answer the question appears hopeless at the first sight. A maze of contradictory evidences seem to drown any possibility of a clear-cut answer. Nevertheless an attempt may not prove entirely unrewarding if we bear in mind the true nature of our evidences and make due allowances for them.

Firstly, we have to make a distinction between the normative and the actual representations of the Brāhmaṇa's position. The difference may perhaps be better described by calling them intellectual and popular representations because the normative representation was not just idealistic without any touch with reality ; although many deviated, quite a few also conformed to the ideal. It was, however, the popular attitude which really determined the class-structure of the society, whatever received the popular approval eventually got sanctified as social custom and forced its way even to legal acceptance.⁶¹ The attitude of the intellectuals to the caste, and especially to the station and duties of the Brāhmaṇas differed from the popular. The intellectuals, however, had to make compromise with the popular on many points. This is how the same texts contain contradictory attitudes to the question of rights and duties of the *varṇa*—same texts contain intellectual and idealised concept of the Brāhmaṇa side by side with the more popular and nearer to life portrait of him. The popular concept of a Brāhmaṇa which represented the broad

reality of actual life was similar in Brāhmanical, Buddhist and Jain works. However, the ideal Brāhmanahood described by our different authorities have certain differences, but even these differences are more external than real, the core being the same. These external differences were the accretions of different religious and philosophical outlooks.⁶²

Ideal Brāhmaṇahood consisted, we may sum up in one word, in purity—purity of birth, thought and conduct. But more important than birth was the conduct, a true Brāhmaṇa was a Brāhmaṇa by his profession and learning. Scorning material gain and worldly power he was to spend his life in spiritual and intellectual activities alone. His religious activities were, however, not to degenerate into priest-craft.⁶³ We find therefore, in the ideal concept of the Brāhmaṇa emphasis was laid on endogamy and even more on occupational purity, that is, a Brāhmaṇa could not have a free choice of profession. The idea of commensality also to a certain extent was accepted. The code of conduct put forward was difficult to achieve, but a few, however, small their number might have been, conformed to the ideal. It was this small section which was the intellectual and moral leader of the society and earned universal admiration equally from Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain circles and even from foreigners.⁶⁴

At the popular level the idea of a Brāhmaṇa was very much different. The code of conduct for a Brāhmaṇa demanded by the society at large was naturally much more liberal and flexible. Everybody could not be expected to share the intellectual's disregard for the economic realities

of life. This was especially difficult in an age of developing economy when wealth was becoming the real measure of social power and prestige. For an average man birth determined the caste; for him this was almost the sole criterion for caste distinctions. He had no time or inclination to bother for the *guṇa* and *karma* theory of social division or its like. For him one was a Brāhmaṇa if one was born of Brāhmaṇa parentage. He could of course expect a Brāhmaṇa to follow certain rules of conduct, especially regarding marriage and to a smaller degree regarding acceptance of food. A Brāhmaṇa would be expected to marry within his own *Varṇa*, but in exceptional cases he was allowed to marry beneath his station also. Normally a Brāhmaṇa would not be expected to take food from certain Sūdras, though under special circumstances the rule could be relaxed. Due to economic pressure the Brāhmaṇas were adopting all sorts of professions and in the popular eyes there was nothing abnormal about it, even though disparaged by the intellectuals.⁶⁵

A Brāhmaṇa and not just of the highest type, but also the ordinary ones, was considered to be of superior birth and was accorded some degree of honour for that. What were the real privileges enjoyed by the Brāhmaṇas cannot be determined. Hurting a Brāhmaṇa was considered to be a sin, but all Brāhmaṇas by virtue of birth alone were not perhaps immune from capital punishment. Some Brāhmaṇas, selection of them depended on the discretion of the king and the administrative authorities, enjoyed certain amount of tax relief. The state often made tax free land

grants to learned Brāhmaṇas, but this could hardly reach every member of the *varṇa*. In other matters, inspite of the *Smṛtis*, a Brāhmaṇa was considered to be just another mortal going about his principal business of earning his bread as best as he could.

CHAPTER III

KṢATRIYAS

Repeating the *Puruṣasūkta* theory Manu states that the Kṣatriyas (Rājanyas in the *Puruṣasūkta*) were created from the arms of the Primordial Man, and the protection of people was their appointed duty. War was traditionally accepted as the Kṣatriya function par excellence. Yet it would be wrong to identify the Kṣatriyas with the warrior class alone. The assumption that only the Kṣatriyas could fight is highly misleading and was not true in any period of Indian history. "The *Ṛgveda* evidently knows of no restriction of war to a nobility and its retainers, but the late *Atharvaveda* equally classes the folk with the *bala*, power, representing the Viś associated with the *Sabhā*, *Samiti* and *Senā*, the assemblies of the people and the armed host,"¹ In the *Arthaśāstra* we find specific references to the army composed of the Brāhmaṇas, Vaiśyas and the Śūdras. The Vaiśya and Śūdra army could rival the efficiency of the hereditary Kṣatriya troops. Sometimes non-Kṣatriya generals are found mentioned in inscriptions also. Many of the important post-Mauryan dynasties, the Śuṅgas, Kāṇvas, Āndhras, Vākātakas, Guptas, etc., were perhaps of non-Kṣatriya lineage. However, tracing back the origin of the Kṣatriya *varṇa* to the dimly lit: early Vedic period we encounter the rise of a hereditary class of nobles, the ruling class, called the Kṣatriyas or Rājanyas, men belonging to the kingly families.

The term *Kṣatra* as used in the Vedas, connotes royalty rather than warriors—it is important to remember this if we are to understand the form, composition and the growth of the Kṣatriya *varṇa*. By the time of our period the Kṣatriyas had solidified into a hereditary class and no longer remained a functional group, the ruling aristocracy. The hereditary character of kingship as well as of administrative positions was perhaps a contributory factor. The development of state and the growing complexity of state organisation and administrative machinery, however, demanded the association and co-operation of various groups and persons. If every one thus associated with administration was to be admitted to the membership of the Kṣatriya *varṇa*, the Kṣatriyas would never attain a *varṇa* character at all. In fact, Ketkar contended that Kṣatriyas never properly speaking formed a *varṇa*.² "There were clans or kindred families which dominated over the rest of the people of their own tribe, and there were some tribes which dominated over several tribes. Both of these classes were called Kṣatriyas. Any people who happened to be dominant called themselves Kṣatriyas and were accepted as such when they could exact homage."³

The observation perhaps contains an element of truth. Kings who were not of Kṣatriya lineage sometimes no doubt sought legitimation by forging Kṣatriya descent,⁴ but this was not a universal practice. The Śuṅgas and the Āndhras seem never to have claimed Kṣatriya status. In the Nasik inscription of Balasri, Gautamiputra Śatakarni is described as having humbled the conceit of the Kṣatriyas. Of course, it is quite explicable that Brāhmaṇa dynasties even after

capturing political power were not keen to acquire Kṣatriya status. Moreover, even to the tribes or castes belonging to a lower social order the Kṣatriya status was not granted immediately or automatically on the ground of political authority and dominant military position. Mahapadma Nanda, even though he was a great conqueror and described as *ekarāt*, continued to be condemned in the Brahmanical literature as a Sudra. Even the Buddhist and Classical writers noted his low birth. Commenting on Pāṇini, Patañjali included the Śakas and the Yavanas among the Sudras, even though they held political power.⁵ He, however, allowed them the right to perform sacrifice and to take food from an Arya dish without permanently polluting it. In the *Manusmṛti* the Śakas and the Yavanas are included in a list of Kṣatriyas who had gradually sunk to the level of the Śūdras. Moreover, some of the ancient famous Kṣatriya tribes like the Licchavis and Mallas came to be called *vrātyas*, i. e., those who did not follow the sacred rites. In the same category are included some other races like the Khasas and the Dravidas. The Licchavis and the Mallas were followers and patrons of Buddhism and Jainism, a fact which was not conducive to making them liked by the *Smṛtikāras*. Similarly the Dravidas, the Khasas, etc., probably till the time of Manu did not fully accept the Brahmanical dominance and precepts. Yet, because of their political power, it was perhaps not possible to put them into any other *varṇa* category but Kṣatriyas. The word *vrāta*, which is considered to be the parent of *vrātya*, appears as early as the *Rgveda*. In Pāṇini the word, as explained in the *Kāśikā*, was used in the sense of people

living by violence.⁶ The *vrāṣas*, have been thus identified with warrior tribes that did not belong within the fold of Aryan society. It has been suggested that already by the time of Pāṇini a movement was afoot to bring these people within the pale of the Aryan society, and that such expressions as *brāhmaṇakṛtāḥ* and *ksatriyakṛtāḥ* encountered in Pāṇini are the relics of that movement. The *vrāṣyas* were thus admitted to the ranks of the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas. There were provisions for the performance of a ritual called *vrātyastoma* by which one ceased to be a *vrātya* and became eligible for social intercourse with the orthodox Aryas.⁷ One could acquire Kṣatriyahood provided one fulfilled certain conditions. A process similar to what Srinivasa calls *sanskṛitisation* was prevalent in ancient time also.⁸ The *Milindapañha* describes king Milinda as a descendant of Kṣatriya kings of old. Princesses belonging to the western Kṣatrapa house were accepted in marriage by the Śātavāhana and Ikṣvāku dynasties. In the *Strīparvan* of the *Mahābhārata*, Jayadratha is said to have Kamboja and Yavana women in his harem.

From the instances noted above it is clear that the Kṣatriya *varṇa* was composed primarily of the hereditary descendants of the old Vedic nobility and in some cases of the new tribes and groups which had wrested political power⁹ and supremacy in the wake of the foreign invasion of the post-Mauryan period. However, every Kṣatriya was not *ipso facto* a member of the ruling nobility any more than every member of the ruling nobility was necessarily a Kṣatriya. The *Kāśikā* commenting on Pāṇini explains the word Rājanya as a member of such families in a Kṣatriya

tribe as were consecrated to rulership. Since the above mentioned *sūtra* in Pāṇini refers to the Andhaka-Vṛṣṇis who had a non-monarchical form of government, consecrated Kṣatriya families (*abhiṣikta vamsya Kṣatriya*) can mean only those who had a hand in the administration. The *Kāśikā*, therefore, distinguishes between the ordinary Kṣatriyas and the Kṣatriyas with political power (termed Rājanyas) who must have formed only a small group.

Considering the Pali Buddhist evidences, Fick also came to the conclusion that the Khattiyas corresponded to the Vedic Rājanyas, members of the ruling class which included the king, his great lords and vassals along with the higher section of the army, and did not still acquire the closed character of a *varṇa*. The development of the Khattiyas into a *varṇa* took place later. Oldenberg, another distinguished Buddhist scholar however, disagrees with Fick and says that the Khattiyas of the Pali texts have as much justifications to be regarded as a *varṇa* as the Brāhmaṇas. However that may be, it is practically certain that by our period the Kṣatriyas were a well-defined category with prescribed ritualistic position in the Śāstras accepted by the Kṣatriyas themselves and the society at large.

In the *Manusmṛti*, the *Yajñavalkyasmṛti* and the *Arthaśāstra*, the duties and occupations of the Kṣatriyas are described as Vedic study, performing sacrifice for themselves, making gifts and protection of people and bearing arms. Vedic study, performance of sacrifice and making of gifts were functions common to the first three *varṇas*. But the protection of people and the military function were the especial Kṣatriya duties. We have to note here the distinc-

tion the *Smṛtis* make between the duties, *dharma* and *karma* (which roughly defines the area of activities as ordained by God) and the means of subsistence, *vṛtti* and *jīvikā* of each order. This distinction has been most emphasised in the case of the Brāhmaṇas, but it has been maintained also in the case of the two other twice-born orders.¹⁰ It is interesting that while defining the various duties of different orders Manu uses the word *karma*, and the duties specified for the twice-born *varṇas* included also those categorised later under the term *dharma*.¹¹ *Karma*, therefore, was a more comprehensive term than either *dharma* or *vṛtti* and *jīvikā*.

Giving protection to people was considered to be the most noteworthy function (*karma*) of the Kṣatriyas, whereas bearing arms or soldiering was considered to be the most appropriate profession (*vṛtti*) of the Kṣatriyas.¹² Could it be suggested that an effort was made to maintain a distinction between the Kṣatriyas' political-administrative duties on the one hand and military functions on the other (*Prajānām paripālanam* or *prajānām rakṣaṇam*, *śastrāstra-vṛttvam*)? Could it be further suggested that while the ordinary Kṣatriyas took to soldiering as a profession, the more important members of the community preferred administrative positions?

It would be readily accepted that the primary duty of the Kṣatriya was the protection of people. The *Ait. Br.** summarised the main characteristics and functions of the kingly office in the following words: "The lordly power hath been born, the Kṣatriya hath been born, the suzerain of all creation hath been born, the eater of the folk hath

**Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*

been born, the slayer of foes hath been born, the guardian of the Brāhmaṇas hath been born, the guardian of the law hath been born."¹³ Theoretically, therefore, the Kṣatriyas were created to maintain the divine order and their function was regarded to be of great importance. That in an earlier period the Kṣatriyas occupied the central position in the social groupings is clear also from another passage in the *Ait. Br.* which describes the position of the three other *varṇas* in their relationship to the Kṣatriyas. It states that the Brāhmaṇa is a receiver of gifts (*ādāyī*), a drinker of soma (*āpāyī*), a seeker of food (*āvasāyī*), and liable to be removed at will ; the Vaiśya is a tributary to another, to be lived on by another and to be oppressed at will ; the Śūdra is the servant of another, to be expelled at will and to be slain at pleasure.¹⁴ This tradition of regarding the Kṣatriyas as the referrent group of social divisions naturally did not find favour with the later day Brāhmaṇical authors who substituted this by the theory of the pre-eminence of Brāhmaṇas. But the tradition perhaps survived in the Buddhist theory of the evolution of the social order according to which the selection of a ruler became the signal for the division of social classes. It is further stated that the selection of the ruler (*mahāsammata*) was the origin of the class (*maṇḍala*) of Khattiyas. Kṣatriyas' function, therefore, was to preserve the existence of society by protecting it from external enemies and by maintaining internal balance. In other words the Kṣatriyas' function was identical with leadership and administration. "The characteristic obligations of the Kṣatriyas are punishment and the conduct of hostilities. The world is such that order can be

maintained only by the threat of violence against those who would use violence. Where the moral ambiguity of action would threaten the authority of others, the Kṣatriya is required to do whatever is necessary to preserve stability and sacred tradition."¹⁵ Administration was, it appears, initially the sole preserve of the Kṣatriyas. Thus the science of polity was called the *Kṣatravidyā*.¹⁶ But as the mechanism of administration started becoming more and more complex, it could not be managed solely by the Kṣatriyas. The result was that this aspect of Kṣatriya function became hazy in the public mind and fighting and military duty came to be looked upon as the special mark of the Kṣatriyas. Though there were some exceptions, we may take the Kṣatriyas as constituting the ruling aristocracy and the upper echelon of the army.

Kṣatriya's association with arms and warfare has been symbolised in various ways. A Kṣatriya was to take oath by his chariot or the animal he rode or by his weapons; at the end of the period of impurity he became pure by touching the animal he rode or his weapons. In the partition of property the special share of the eldest son of a Kṣatriya was horses. His name was to be so given that the first part was to denote power and the second part to imply protection. A Kṣatriya boy who wished to become 'powerful' was to be initiated in the sixth year, and the girdle to be used was to be made of bowstring. Seniority among the Kṣatriyas was to be measured not by age but by valour. On marrying a man of higher *varṇa*, the Kṣatriya bride was to hold an arrow, the other end of which was to be held by the bridegroom and recite the *mantras*.¹⁷

Not to shrink from battle was the avowed duty of the Kṣatriya. The use of arms was his style of life. The *Milindapañha* speaks of high born warriors whose delight was in war. The highest duty and pleasure of warrior was to die fighting. To die fighting in battle was in keeping with Kṣatriya code of conduct (*Kāṣṭradharma*): death in battle leads to heaven; kings who fight with great energy and do not turn back attain heaven. Kautilya goes even a step further in eulogising the virtue of meeting death in battle. "Brave men, giving up their lives in good battles reach in one moment even beyond those (worlds) which Brahmins, desirous of heaven, reach by a large number of sacrifices, by penance and by many gifts to worthy persons."¹⁸ A brave soldier dying in battle would not just attain heaven, but would be sought by divine maidens who would choose him for their lord.

Cowardice has been as severely condemned, as bravery has been eulogised. To escape from the field of battle without fighting or to ask for quarter, was not only an offence against the king and state, but also against God. A Kṣatriya who runs away from battle goes to hell. A Kṣatriya who is slain in battle while fleeing away in fear, takes upon himself all the sin of his master and all his merits go to the master. It was not only taking to flight in battle, but also refusal to fight, that has been made a sin deserving condemnation to hell.

It is of course true, that persons belonging to *varṇas* other than the Kṣatriyas also joined the army. Warfare was no Kṣatriya monopoly. Even the *senāpati*, the commander-in-chief of the army, could be recruited either

from the Kṣatriya or Brāhmaṇa order.¹⁹ But it can be assumed, without much fear of contradiction, that hereditary troops belonging to the Kṣatriya *varṇa* constituted the mainstay of the fighting machinery of states. Kautilya disagreed with the earlier teachers that the Brāhmaṇa army was the best. He preferred well trained Ksatriya troops or alternatively a strong army consisting of Vaiśyas and Śūdras.²⁰ Six kinds of troops, *Maulabala*, *Bhṛtabala*, *Śrenibala*, *Mitrabala*, *Amitrabala* and *Atavibala* have been described by Kautilya. Five of these kinds are mentioned also in the *Rāmāyana*.²¹ The *Maulabala* perhaps refers to the standing army of the state which appears to have consisted mostly of Kṣatriyas. Describing the excellences of an army Kautilya writes: "Inherited from the father and the grandfather, constant, obedient, with the soldier's sons and wives contented, not disappointed during marches, unhindered everywhere, able to put up with troubles, that has fought many battles, skilled in the science of all types of war and weapons, not having a separate interest because of prosperity and adversity shared (with the king), consisting mostly of Kṣatriyas—these are the excellences of an army."²² This description probably applied to the *Maulabala*. "The word *maula* is derived from *mūla* which often refers to the native land... Primarily then the expression means a native force."²³ An army inherited from father and grandfather must have been the standing army or the *Maulabala*. It is a safe conclusion that the Kṣatriyas dominated the most important division of the army.

It was natural that in the education and training of the Kṣatriya boys special emphasis was laid on the art of fight-

ing. The *Milindapañha* states that the business of the Kṣatriyas was to learn managing elephants and horses, chariotry, archery and fencing; to acquire a knowledge about writing and accounts; to fight themselves and lead others in war, and to carry on the tradition of the Kṣatriya clans.²⁴ From the descriptions of the princes' training in the epics, it appears that the curriculum was highly biased in favour of manly exercises and virtues of a soldier. They were trained principally in the art of fighting. However, it would be wrong to assume that emphasis was placed alone on the acquisition of soldierly qualities and that the development of mind was starved. The scheme of training for the prince, given in the *Arthaśāstra*, includes, besides the arts of using elephants, horses, chariots and weapons, not only the three R's but also a thorough knowledge of the *Vedas*, philosophy, economics and politics as well as *Purāṇas*, *Itivṛtta*, *Ākhyāyikā*, *Udāharara*, *Dharmaśāstra* and *Arthaśāstra* (all these from *Purāṇas* to *Arthaśāstra* constituted *Itihāsa*).²⁵ Interestingly, king Milinda is said to have a knowledge of nineteen arts and sciences, which included *Śruti* (*Vedas*), *Smṛti*, *Sāṃkhya*, *Yoga*, *Nyāya*, *Vaiśeṣika*, Arithmetic, Music, Medicine, Archery, *Purāṇas*, *Itihāsa*, Astronomy, Magic causation, Spells, the art of war, Poetry and Currency.²⁶ The science of politics with all its ramifications was explained to Yudhisthira by Bhīṣma, the greatest of the heroes of the *Mahābhārata*. In the Junāgarh inscription Rudradāman is said to have studied, besides polity, also grammar and logic. Khāravela, the king of Orissa, was also a highly cultivated person. Samudra Gupta's proficiency in the *Śāstras* and literature has been

described in the most glowing terms in Allahabad inscription. In the Buddhist works we find Kṣatriya princes travelling to distant Taxila to study under world famous teachers. There might have been some exaggerations in these accounts, and an ideal curriculum meant for a prince is perhaps not the correct representation of the educational standard of an ordinary Kṣatriya. Subjects that he had to study were perhaps not as comprehensive. Yet, the available evidences indicate that as much care was taken for the development of mind and intellect as the cultivation of military virtues among the Kṣatriya youths. In the *Smṛtis*, in fact, practically no distinction has been made in the mode or manner of teaching among the twice-born pupils—they appear to have received the same type of instruction from the same teachers. Difference seems to have been made only in the externalities of sacraments.²⁷

At the age of sixteen a Kṣatriya noble attained manhood and was entitled to take part in war as a major. When Viśvāmitra came to take Rāma to fight the *Rākṣasas*, Dasaratha pleaded that he was not yet sixteen. At sixteen Abhimanyu was a full fledged knight. That the custom was not an imaginary heroic ideal painted by the Eipcs is proved by the *Arthaśāstra*, which states that the prince should observe celibacy till the sixteenth year and thereafter he was to marry.

Despite the fact that the Kṣatriyas loved warfare, and that war was consciously promoted as an item of state policy,²⁸ a set of extremely humane rules were evolved and an effort was made to prevent war from degenerating into meaningless carnage and genocide. The *Arthaśāstra* lists

seven categories of persons who were not to be attacked—*patita* (fallen down), *parānmukha* (turned back on the fight), *abhipanna* (surrendered), *muktakeśa* (who had loosened his hair as a mark of submission), *muktaśāstra* (who had laid down his weapons), *bhayavirūpa* (who was seized with extreme fear), and *āyuddhyamāna* (non-combatant). In the *Mahābhārata* we are further told that only warriors having the same weapons should fight each other. One fighting with another or rendered helpless due to the defect of weapons, or one seeking quarter or panic stricken or fleeing away was not to be attacked. These rules were not always very strictly followed. But, that such rules were framed and were repeated in so many different texts shows the ideal the Kṣatriya chivalry strove to achieve. There is evidence to prove that honest attempts were made to follow at least some of these rules. Megasthenes tells us that cultivators continued working on fields close to the battle ground without fear of any harm coming to them. Neither the policy of scorched earth nor general destruction of enemy's territory were followed.

According to Greek writers the soldiers were paid so well by the state that they spent their peace time in sports and frolicking.²⁹ The equipment of the soldiers came from the royal arsenal, the elephants and horses from royal stables. The care of the animals was the duty of others and not of the soldiers themselves.³⁰ It is interesting that the residential division, where the Kṣatriyas lived according to the *Arthaśāstra*, was shared by the dealers in perfumes, flowers, and liquids and makers of articles of toilet.³¹ Does it indicate the Kṣatriya's association with a life of luxury

and gaiety ? The catalogue of salaries in the *Arthaśāstra* also confirms the impression that the soldiers were well paid. The commander-in-chief was among the highest paid officials of the state. He received along with the sacrificial priest, the preceptor, the minister, the chaplain, the crown prince, the king's mother and the crowned queen fortyeight thousand *paṇas*. The commandant was to get twelve thousand ; the heads of banded troops, the commandants of elephants, horses and chariot corps were to get eight thousand ; superintendents of infantry, cavalry, chariots and elephants four thousand ; chariot fighter two thousand and even an ordinary foot soldier received five hundred. In comparison a trained artisan got one hundred and twenty and an ordinary labourer only sixty. Soldiers were not only paid liberally in cash, they were given their daily rations free from the royal store-house. The details with which the duties of the superintendent of the armoury, who was in charge of manufacturing and storing of all kinds of weapons, are enumerated, gives the impression that arms production was a monopoly of the state.³² Similarly there were superintendents to look after and take care of horses, elephants, and chariots. The commandant of the army, trained in all weapons, renowned for riding elephants, horses and use of chariots was entrusted with the training of troops. In other words, the standing army, consisting mostly of hereditary Kṣatriya troops, was equipped, fed and paid for by the king. Thus warriors appear to have been quite well off.

It is difficult to determine with certainty the extent of Kṣatriyas share in administration. Although quite a few

instances of non-Ksatriya kings are to be found, normally a king was expected to be a Kṣatriya. In fact the words Kṣatriya and king have been used as synonyms. Kings of Brāhmaṇa lineage are mentioned in the *Jātakas*. A number of the post-Mauryan dynasties were perhaps of Brāhmaṇa *Varṇa*—*Āndhras*, *Śungas*, *Kaṇvas*, *Vākātaka*, *Gaṅgās*, *Kadambas*, etc. But the attempt appears to be more interesting to attribute Ksatriya descent to the ruling families which originally belonged to social groups outside the *varṇa* hierarchy or below the ranks of the Kṣatriyas. We have already noted the case of Menander who had been given a Kṣatriya descent in the *Milindapañha*. The cognomen Gupta according to the *Smṛti* rules was indicative of *Vaiśya Varṇa*, yet, the Gupta had matrimonial connection with the Kṣatriyas (Licchavis and Nāgas) and Brāhmaṇas (Vākātakas). In a Javanese text the Guptas came to be described as belonging to Ikṣvāku race. The Śakas of western India established marriage relationship with the Ikṣvākus of the Kṛṣṇa-Godāvari region.

It may be assumed that in military administration the Kṣatriyas were given preference though the Brāhmaṇas were also appointed. About civil administration we can speak with even less confidence. A host of officials are mentioned in the contemporary inscriptions, but rarely the *varṇa* status has been indicated. Only in Junāgarh inscription of Rudradāman, a provincial governor (*rāṣṭrīya*) has been described as a Vaiśya and a minister (*amātya*) as Pāhlava. Does this indicate that the appointment of a Vaiśya to a high administrative position was an exceptional event which prompted the pointed reference to the *varṇa*

status of the *rāṣṭrīya*?³⁴ Generally speaking, the higher administrative positions seem to have been monopolised by the Brāhmanas and Ksatriyas. "Kṣatriyas prosper not without Brāhmaṇas, Brāhmaṇas prosper not without Kṣatriyas; Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas, being closely united prosper in this (world) and in the next."³⁵ It is not possible to determine the *varṇa* composition of the ministers who were expected to be consulted by the king in making decisions. Unfortunately, different terms have been used for ministers—*amātya*, *saciva*, *mantrī*, etc. It is not clear whether these terms denote different gradations of ministers or they were synonyms for the same class of officials.³⁶ Etymologically, Basak has pointed out,³⁷ *amātya* and *saciva* mean companions or associates and *mantrī* means one who gives *mantra* or secret counsel.³⁸ It is not unlikely that while the *mantrīs* were ministers and counsellors, the *amātyas* were executive officers. Generally speaking *sacivas* also seem to have been executive officers. Manu, however, seems to make a distinction between the *sacivas* and *amātyas*. While dexterity in wielding weapons (*labdhā-lakṣān*) was one of the essential qualifications for a *saciva*, no such qualification was thought necessary for an *amātya*.³⁹ In Junāgarh inscription of Rudradāman two classes of *sacivas*—*matī sacivas* and *karma sacivas*—are distinguished. Evidently the *matī sacivas* were counsellors and *Karma sacivas* executive officers.⁴⁰

Among the *karma sacivas* perhaps there were more Kṣatriyas than others. However, in a passage in the *Śāntiparvan* we find the interesting statement that the king should have thirty seven *sacivas*, four of whom should be

Brāhmanas, eight Kṣatriyas, twenty-one Vaiśyas, three Śūdras and one Sūta. R. S. Sharma⁴¹ writes that too much, has been made of this passage ever since it was cited by Hopkins. He points out that the passage does not find a place in the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata*, which however, refers to the composition of the body of eight 'mantrīs, out of whom four were to be Brāhmanas, three loyal Śūdras and one Sūta. It is doubtful whether such, liberal precept as appointing twenty-one *sacivas* of *Vaiśya varṇa* was actually followed. High birth seems to have been a very important consideration for appointment of *mantrī*, *amātya* and *saciva*.⁴² Examination of *amāccas* in Buddhist works show that they were mostly Kṣatriyas, though occasionally Brāhmaṇas were also appointed. On the authority of Megasthenes, Arrian writes that only the noblest and the richest took part in state affairs and sat in the council with the king. Describing the qualifications of the ambassador the *Śāntiparvan* states that he should be of noble family and steadfast in upholding the Kṣatriya code (*Kulīnah, kṣātradharmā ratāh*).⁴³ The evidence cited above leaves the impression that the bureaucracy was composed, with some exceptions, of the members of the first two *varṇas*. While the Brāhmaṇas enjoyed a substantial share in the framing of the state policy in their capacity as counsellors, the executive power was perhaps vested mostly in the Kṣatriya officers. Even about the appointment of ministers Spellman writes that although in the mediaeval times the Brāhmaṇa appears to have been dominant, it is not unreasonable to assume that in the time in which the Arthaśāstra and the *Mahābhārata* flourished, it was the

Kṣatriya who dominated the council of ministers, despite the passage from the Śāntiparvan which allowed twenty-one Vaiśyas in a council of thirty-seven.

Recently Walter Ruben has contended that since Kauṭilya prescribes the grant of *brahmadeya* to heads of departments (*adhyakṣas*), accountants and a host of smaller officials like *gopa* (administrator of five or ten villages), *sthānika* (*gopa*'s superior), *anikastha* (elephant trainer), *cikitsaka* (physician), *aśvadamaka* (horse trainer) and *janghākārika* (couriers), along with *ritvijs*, *ācāryas*, *purohitas* and *śrotriyas* it may be supposed that these officers were all Brāhmaṇas.⁴⁴ Kangle, however, maintains that the *sūtra* in question draws a distinction between two types of land grants—(1) the *brahmadeya*, the tax free land granted to the above mentioned classes of Brāhmaṇas and (2) the lands granted to state officials who enjoyed only the usufruct of the land but neither full ownership nor exemption from taxes.⁴⁵ There is no evidence therefore to connect the *gopas*, etc., with *brahmadeya* or the Brāhmaṇa *varṇa*.

During the time of distress Manu allows a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya to adopt Vaiśya's mode of living. It is interesting that they are advised to avoid the pursuit of agriculture. Trade thus was thought preferable to tilling. Even in trade certain restrictions were put—they were asked not to deal in a number of commodities. Manu also allows the Kṣatriyas, though grudgingly, the right to lend money on interest during times of distress.

According to Ruben evidence of the existence of big Kṣatriya landholders in monarchical states is lacking. He

further suggested that in monarchical states perhaps a conscious policy was pursued to keep the Kṣatriyas on the pay roll of the king and to prevent them from growing into independent land holders which might prove dangerous to the system of monarchical government.⁴⁶ But we find in one of the verses of Manu⁴⁷ reference to some Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas possessing large farms and cattle wealth. It is stated there that a Brāhmaṇa for completion of a sacrifice may take the articles he needs from the house of a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya who does not drink soma-juice even though possessing a hundred or thousand cows. There is nothing to indicate that the verse refers to a republic. It does not appear likely that the entire Kṣatriya *varṇa* lived by the profession of arms alone and that their income depended solely on the cash payments from the king. We have already referred to the practice described in the *Arthaśāstra*⁴⁸ of making land grants to officials. This practice is also mentioned by Manu. In two consecutive verses Manu states that the king should station a company (*gulma*) of soldiers as a security measure in the midst of two, three, five or hundred villages. Further, he has to appoint a 'lord' (*adhipati, pati*, i.e., the local administrator) over each village as well as lords over ten, twenty, hundred and thousand villages.⁴⁹ This suggests that the civil and the army administration were closely linked up and there was no clear division between the two.⁵⁰ Manu further states that the lords of ten, twenty, hundred and thousand villages were to receive land ranging from one *kula*⁵¹ to a *pura*.⁵² Even the *Śukranītisāra*,⁵³ which was against payment to royal officers through gift of lands and favoured

cash payments, grudgingly conceded that the king could allot land to officers for their life time only. In an age when much of state revenue was paid in kind it was perhaps not possible to pay in cash the salaries to all its employees even if the government so desired. Whatever might have been the mode of payment, in cash or in kind or in both, it is clear from the available evidences that the state employees were well provided for and a prosperous and comfortable living standard was assured in state service. The *Mahābhārata* enjoined on the king the duty to support the wives of those who died or met calamities in royal service. And, as we have argued above, many of these officers must have belonged to the Kṣatriya *varṇa*.⁵⁴

A few instances of the Kṣatriyas taking to trade are found in the *Jātakas*. The *Arthaśāstra* mentions some Kṣatriya republics of western India, like the Kambojas, Surāṣṭras, etc., who lived by economic pursuits and profession of arms (*vārttā śāstropajivināḥ*). Some of the Kṣatriya republican tribes, e.g., the Śākyas, including the very highest and the most affluent of them, would not mind put themselves behind the plough and till the land personally during peace period though they were essentially a martial people.⁵⁵

We may note here the interesting thesis advanced by Ruben that the political and economic development of the monarchical and republican (*saṃgha, gaṇa*) states took on different lines bringing about a striking difference in the status of the Kṣatriyas under the two political systems. From the later Vedic period a struggle had started between the king, Kṣatriyas and Brāhmaṇas for the power of

exploiting the chief means of production which was obviously agriculture. In the monarchical state the Brāhmaṇas co-operated with the king to establish his claim to be regarded as the sole recipient of rent from soil. In return the Brāhmaṇas got the right to receive *brahmadeya* and grew into a land holding class. The Kṣatriyas came to be organised as the military and administrative nobility but remained paid servants of the king. In the republican state, however, the Kṣatriyas grew into a landed aristocracy dominating both its economic and political life. The Brāhmaṇas played very little role in the socio-economic life of the republics.⁵⁶

It may at once be conceded that in the *saṃghas* the Kṣatriyas as a class were politically more influential than they were in monarchical states for the obvious reason that in the republican system the Kṣatriya nobility had a direct participation in the affairs of the state. But to say that the Brāhmaṇas were not regarded as the first *varṇa* in the republican states, as evidenced by the way the Brāhmaṇa Ambaṭṭha was despised by the proud Śākyas,⁵⁷ does not appear to be correct. From the Greek accounts of the community called *Brahmanoi* it appears that there were some Brāhmaṇa republican tribes as well. In the Buddhist and Jain works, because the founders of these religions were Kṣatriya, the Kṣatriyas have been generally described as superior to the Brāhmaṇas. The attitude was not so much due to the differences in the structure of government as to the differences in religion. The royal pride which often looked down upon the priestly class is also found in monarchical states. King Prasenajit, who was a despot on

all counts, never allowed his priest Pokkharasāti to see his face ; he spoke to him through the curtain. That the king was thought to be superior to the Brāhmaṇa is also repeated in the *Milindapañha*. "And again, when Devadatta became a king among the Cetas., then the Bodisat was a Brāhmaṇa named Kapila. So in that case too it was Devadatta who was the superior in birth and in reputation."⁵⁸ This superiority claimed for the king has nothing to do with a republican constitution. Moreover, from the Buddhist works it is clear that the Śākya pride of lineage was expressed not only against Brāhmaṇas but also against other Kṣatriya families whom they considered inferior. When asked for the hands of a Śākya maiden by the great king Prasenajit the proud Śākyas sent Vāsabhakhattiyā, the daughter of a slave woman, instead. The pride of the ruling aristocracy and the sneering attitude towards the priestly class is found expressed in the Brahmanical literature too. Princess Śarmiṣṭhā finding Devayānī, the daughter of *purohita*, assuming an air of superiority retorted, "Enough of presumptuousness. Your father sitting in a humbler place goes on flattering my father day and night. You are the daughter of him who begs and flatters. I am the daughter of him who donates and is praised."⁵⁹

We may agree with Ruben that in the republican states a large number of Kṣatriyas appear to have been big land holders. In the preamble of the *Ekaṇṇa Jātaka* it is stated that in the city of Vaiśālī there were 7707 *rājās* to govern the kingdom and a like number of *uparājās*, *senāpatīs* and *bhāṇḍāgārikas*. Similarly the *Lalitavistara* states that at Vaiśālī every body thought himself to be a

rājā. To the east of the Beas at the time of Alexander, the Greek writers reported the existence of a non-monarchical tribe which had a ruling assembly of 500 members, each of whom provided the state with an elephant. In the *Arthaśāstra* the Licchavis, Vṛjjis, Mallas, Madrakas, Kukuras, Kurus, Pāñcālas and a few others are described as living on the title of *rājā* (*rājaśabdopajivināh*). It is quite likely that the members of the ruling councils in these states were all men of considerable property in the shape of estates, and each of these members had his own small army and *senāpati* and *bhāṇḍāgārika*, elephants, etc.⁶⁰ But as we have seen above, it is difficult to agree with Ruben's opinion that in the monarchical states the Kṣatriyas were not land holders. Moreover, even if we accept that the Brāhmaṇas probably did not play a very prominent role in the republican states and that they were generally hostile to the republics, it would not be correct to say that they had no influence in the republics at all. In the *Mahābhārata*⁶¹ Kṛṣṇa, the leader of the Vṛṣṇi republic, had to turn to the Brāhmaṇa Nārada for advice to maintain peace and order in the republic. According to the *Buddha Carita* when the Buddha was born king Suddhodhana asked for the learned Brāhmaṇas to tell him about the future of his son. And in his attitude towards these Brāhmaṇas there was no trace of disrespect. Moreover, it may not be fully correct to hold that it was only the Brahmanical writers who were the apologists for royal absolutism and that the Buddhists did not subscribe to the ideal of absolute kingship. In fact some scholars have expressed the opinion that Buddhism was an important factor in the growth of royal absolutism. "In

attacking the role and superior social position of the priests, who had constituted a primary check on royal despotism, Buddhism indirectly assisted the destruction of the old balance of power. The growth of Buddhism and the rise of absolutism are features of the same age and it would not be too wide of the mark to suggest that the new religion contributed to this political development in much the same way that Luther aided the interests of the German princes."⁶²

Despite these minor shortcomings Ruben's theory remains extremely interesting and the line of enquiry suggested by him, if pursued to further details, might yield useful materials for sketching the socio-economic history of early India.

From the evidence discussed above we may conclude that the Kṣatriyas in both the monarchical and republican states were a politically dominant group. It also appears that they were economically prosperous too. In a Gupta inscription a Kṣatriya Acalavarman is mentioned along with the Bhrukuṇṭhasimha merchants as a benefactor of the great sun temple of Indrapur. The Kṣatriyas presumably used their political power for fiscal and economic advantages. We have already referred to the *Arthaśāstra* evidence regarding land grants to officials of the state. The *Milinda-pañha* further indicates that during a period of emergency when the normal exemptions from taxation were suspended the high officials continued to enjoy immunity. "Suppose, O king, a king had four chief ministers, faithful, famous, trustworthy, placed in high positions of authority. And the king, on some emergency arising, were to issue to them

an order touching all the people in his realm saying : 'Let all now pay a tax, and do you as my four officers, carry out what is necessary in this emergency ! Now tell me, O King, would the tremor which comes from the fear of taxation arise in the hearts of those ministers ?' "No, Sir, it would not." "But why not ?" "They have been appointed by the king to high office. Taxation does not affect them, they are beyond taxation. It was the rest that the king referred to when he gave the order : 'Let all pay tax'." ⁶³

From the occupational we may now turn to the other aspects of the Kṣatriya's life. The naming ceremony of the child born was to be performed on the tenth or twelfth day after the birth for the members of all *varṇas*. A Kṣatriya male child was to be so named as to indicate power and protection. Similarly no distinction was made on the basis of *varṇa* in matters of other early sacraments like *niṣkramaṇa* (first leaving of the house), *annaprāśana* (first feeding with rice) and *cūḍākarmaṇ* (tonsure).

In the *upanayana* ceremony, certain ritualistic differences were prescribed. Brāhmaṇa was to be initiated in the eighth, Kṣatriya in the eleventh and a Vaiśya in the twelfth year. A Kṣatriya aspiring to be specially adept in his profession and to be powerful was advised to be initiated in as early as the sixth year after birth. Twenty second year after birth was the highest limit by which a Kṣatriya's initiation had to take place. In case initiation was not performed by that age one would become a *vrāṭiya*, 'excluded from Savitrī and despised by the Āryans.' Differences were also made in the wear, thread and staff according to the *varṇa* of the initiated pupil, e.g., garment of hemp was

recommended for the Brāhmaṇa, of flax for the Kṣatriya and of wool for the Vaiśya ; staff of *bilva* or *palāśa* for the Brāhmaṇa, *vaṭa* or *khadira* for the Kṣatriya and *pīlu* or *udumbra* for the Vaiśya. The staff of the Brāhmaṇa pupil was to be the longest and that of the Vaiśya was to be the shortest. The clipping of hair (*keśānta*) of the Brāhmaṇa was to take place in the sixteenth year, of the Kṣatriya in the twenty second and of the Vaiśya in the twenty fourth. The Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya were all enjoined to perform the daily rites and recite the *Ṛk* verses. The period of impurity for the Kṣatriya was twelve days against ten for the Brāhmaṇa and fifteen for the Vaiśya and a month for the Śūdra.

According to a general rule, except in certain criminal cases involving the loss of life, theft, adultery, defamation, assault, etc., a man of equal *varṇa* alone could give evidence for a person. Thus a Kṣatriya normally could give evidence only for a Kṣatriya. The *Arthaśāstra*, however, does not appear to restrict the witnesses to the members of equal *varṇa*. Generally speaking, a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya witness was not expected to give false evidence—the manner of examining the witnesses of various *varṇas* by the judge described in the *Manusmṛti* indicates that. “Let him examine a Brāhmaṇa (beginning with) ‘speak,’ a Kṣatriya (beginning with) ‘speak the truth,’ a Vaiśya (admonishing him) by (mentioning) his kine, grain and gold, a Śūdra (threatening him) with (the guilt of) every crime that causes loss of caste. .”⁶⁴ Kauṭilya, however, shows his characteristic practical attitude—he does not appear to make any exception for witnesses of any order. For the examination

of witnesses he writes : "The (judge) should exhort witnesses in the presence of Brāhmaṇas, a water-jar and fire. In that connection he should say to a Brāhmaṇa (witness), 'speak the truth.' To a Kṣatriya or a Vaiśya (he should say), 'Let there be no fruit of sacrificial and charitable deeds for you (if you speak untruth); you would go potsherd in hand, begging for alms to the house of your enemy.' To the Śūdra (he should say), 'Whatever the reward of your merit between birth and death, that would go to the king and the king's sin come to you in case of a false deposition, and punishment will also follow; even afterwards facts as seen and heard would be found out; being of one mind bring out the truth.'⁶⁵ It is interesting to note that while in the *Manusmṛti* in examining witnesses the Brāhmaṇa and the Kṣatriya appear to have been put in one category, Kauṭilya couples the Kṣatriya with the Vaiśya. A Kṣatriya, guilty of perjury, however, was to be meted out the same punishment as the members of the three lower *varṇas*—he was to be fined and banished. A Brāhmaṇa guilty of the same crime was to be simply banished but not fined. Kauṭilya, however, appears to recommend fine as the punishment for perjury for witnesses of all *varṇas*.⁶⁶

Punishments, were graded on the *varṇa* basis. The Kṣatriyas' legal position was thus next to that of the Brāhmaṇas. There are some differences between the *Manusmṛti* and the *Arthaśāstra* regarding the amount and incidence of punishments in certain cases, although, generally they show the same spirit and principle. For example, according to Manu a Kṣatriya had to pay one hundred *panas* for defaming a Brāhmaṇa and a Brāhmaṇa had to pay

fifty for defaming a Kṣatriya. For defaming a Brāhmaṇa a Vaiśya had to pay one hundred and fifty or two hundred and a Śūdra suffered corporal punishment for the same offence, while a Brāhmaṇa was fined twenty five and twelve *paṇas* for defaming a Vaiśya and a Śūdra respectively. According to another provision a Brāhmaṇa abusing a Kṣatriya was to be fined lowest amercement (i.e., 150 *paṇas*) and a Kṣatriya for abusing a Brāhmaṇa was to pay middle amercement (i.e., 500 *paṇas*). Kauṭilya in a *sūtra* states that in case of libel concerning character, among Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, Śūdras and the lowest born, the fines are three *paṇas* increased by three *paṇas* successively if the defamation is of the earlier by the latter and the fine should decrease by two *paṇas* successively upto two *paṇas* if the defamation is of the later by the earlier. Kangle explains the clause as fines of 12, 9, 6, 3 *paṇas* respectively if an Antāvasāyin vilifies a Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and a Śūdra ; 9, 6, 3 *paṇas* if a Śūdra vilifies the three upper *varṇas* and so on ; and 8, 6, 4, 2 *paṇas* if a Brāhmaṇa defames a Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, Śūdra and Antāvasāyin respectively ; 6, 4, 2 if a Kṣatriya defames a Vaiśya, Śūdra and Antāvasāyin respectively and so on.⁶⁷ If this interpretation of Kangle is accepted we are led to a position quite different from the one indicated by Manu. A Kṣatriya then would be fined 3 *paṇas* for defaming a Brāhmaṇa against a Brāhmaṇa paying 8 *paṇas* for defaming a Kṣatriya. Similarly a Kṣatriya defaming a Vaiśya had to pay 6 *paṇas* whereas a Vaiśya defaming a Kṣatriya had to pay 3 *paṇas*. It would probably be better to explain the clause as fines of 12, 9, 6, 3 *paṇas* if an Antāvasāyin defames

a Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra ; and 12, 9, 6 *paṇas* if a Śūdra defames the members of three higher *varṇas* and so on. Thus we would arrive at two fixed scales ; all men of lower *varṇas* were fined 12, 9, 6, 3 *paṇas* respectively for defaming a Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra respectively and all men of higher *varṇas* were fined 8, 6, 4, 2 *paṇas* for defaming Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, Śūdra and Antāvasāyin respectively. That is, the fine for defaming a Brāhmaṇa was 12 *paṇas* for members of all lower *varṇas* from the Kṣatriya down to the Antāvasāyin, the fine for defaming a Kṣatriya was 8 *paṇas* for a Vaiśya, a Śūdra, and Antāvasāyin and so on. Similarly the fine for defaming an Antāvasāyin was 2 *paṇas* for a Śūdra a Vaiśya, a Kṣatriya, or a Brāhmaṇa ; the fine for defaming a Śūdra was 4 *paṇas* for members of all higher *varṇas* from the Vaiśya upto the Brāhmaṇa and so on. Even if we accept this interpretation the difference between Manu and Kauṭilya regarding the amount of fine e.g., for defamation of a Brāhmaṇa by a Kṣatriya 12 *paṇas* according to the *Arthaśāstra* and 100 *paṇas* according to the *Manusmṛti* remains rather big. Probably the *Arthaśāstra* was nearer to reality as the *Arthaśāstra* clause is more comprehensive ; it lists punishments for all cases of defamation involving various *varṇas* whereas Manu passes over in silence the cases of defamation of the Vaiśya and Śūdra by the Kṣatriya or the defamation of the Kṣatriya by the Vaiśya. It is interesting to note in this connection that according to Manu the fine for defaming a twice-born man of equal *varṇa* was 12 *paṇas*.⁶⁷

In their relationship with the Śūdras regarding defamation, the Kṣatriyas were placed by Manu on a par with the

Brāhmaṇas. A once-born man (Śūdra) insulting a twice-born man was to have his tongue cut off.⁶⁸ That this rule did not apply to the Vaiśyas abused by the Śūdras has been made clear in another verse by Manu, according to which the Śūdras defaming the Vaiśyas were to pay a fine of middle amercement.⁶⁹

Regarding assault we do not find any specific rule involving the Kṣatriyas in our texts. However, in the *Arthaśāstra* there is a general rule that the fines for certain kinds of assault were doubled if the offence was against superiors and halved if the offence was against inferiors. For making a Kṣatriya consume unconsumable food middle-range fine was recommended by Kauṭilya against highest for making a Brāhmaṇa and lowest for making a Vaiśya do the same.

A Kṣatriya was allowed to take wives from his own as well as from the *varṇas* below him, though a Śūdra woman was not expected to be his first wife. Out of the different types of marriages the *rākṣasa* and *gāndharva* were specially associated with the Kṣatriyas. The *rākṣasa* marriage or abduction of maidens—often willing maidens—was quite a prevalent practice among the Kṣatriyas. This is proved by several instances in the Epics. Can it be suggested that the Kṣatriyas had a little more than average appetite for women and that in this matter they did not always place too great an importance on the *varṇa* of the women? Some support to such a hypothesis comes not only from the fact that the *gāndharva* and *rākṣasa* marriages were associated especially with the Kṣatriyas, but also from the fact that the *Manu-smṛti* prescribes maximum fine for the Kṣatriyas for violation of women. Was this special punitive measure expected

to act as a deterrent to the Kṣatriya practice of carrying off women by force? Dumont suggests that probably there were two different patterns of marriage : isogamous monogamy among the Brāhmaṇas and graduated polygamy among the Kṣatriyas. The *Śāstras* had to accept both the customs and harmonise them. Moreover, it was felt that 'the Brāhmaṇa should not be refused a prerogative so abundantly enjoyed by the Kṣatriyas.'⁷⁰

Normally a wife was not allowed to remarry. But Kauṭilya allows the wife to get dissolution of her marriage and even remarry after waiting for the husband who had gone away from her on a long journey. The specified period of waiting in such cases varied according to the *varṇa* rank of the wife. It increased proportionately as the *varṇa* rank of the waiting wife mounted—one year for the Śūdra, two for the Vaiśya, three for the Kṣatriya and four for the Brāhmaṇa. The period would double if she had issues.

The monthly rate of interest also depended on the *varṇa*, the Kṣatriyas paid three per cent against four and five per cents by the Vaiśyas and Śūdras respectively. The Brāhmaṇas paid only two per cent. As for the partition of property, a Brāhmaṇa's son by a Kṣatriya wife was to receive three out of ten shares, the sons of the Brāhmaṇa, Vaiśya and Śūdra wives were to get four, two and one respectively of the remaining shares. Similarly a Kṣatriya's sons by the wives of the three *varṇas* were to receive the shares of the paternal estate according to the following order : son by the Kṣatriya wife was to get three shares, son by the Vaiśya wife two shares and son by the Śūdra wife one share. Kauṭilya by an alternative rule provides a

Brāhmaṇa's son by a wife belonging to the immediately next *varṇa* with a share equal to that of a son by a Brāhmaṇa wife.⁷¹

The law of adultery as given in the *Manusmṛti* was eminently fair and free from *varṇa* prejudices except against the Śūdras. Violation of a twice-born female by a Śūdra was a capital offence. For other *varṇas* a uniform principle appears to have been followed—a fine of one thousand *paṇas* was imposed for violating a guarded woman and five hundred for unguarded woman without any discrimination being made for the *varṇa* status of the offender and the victim. For outraging a Brāhmaṇa woman a Kṣatriya or a Vaiśya had to suffer some additional punishments. There are, however, some rules pertaining to the Kṣatriyas which seem to have deviated from the general principle. If these rules were genuine we have to conclude that regarding the laws of adultery the Kṣatriyas were placed at a comparative disadvantage. Whereas a Kṣatriya defiling an unguarded Brāhmaṇa female was fined one thousand *paṇas*, Vaiśya for the same offence was fined five hundred *paṇas* only. Similarly, while a Kṣatriya violating a guarded Vaiśya or a Śūdra woman was fined one thousand, a Vaiśya violating a Kṣatriya woman, whether guarded or unguarded, had to pay a fine of five hundred only. Even for violating a guarded Śūdra woman a Vaiśya had to pay as big a fine as one thousand *paṇas*. These rules so greatly discriminate against the Kṣatriyas that they raise doubts regarding the validity of these provisions.⁷² However, in the *Manu* and *Yājñavalkya Smṛtis* we also find a general principle that for defiling women of higher *varṇa* capital punishment, for

women of equal *varṇa* punishment of the highest degree (*uttama sāhasa*) and for woman of lower *varṇa* punishment of the middle-range degree were to be given.⁷³ It is more likely that this latter provision was normally applied rather than the ones enumerated earlier.

If in the law of adultery we find an admirable attempt to rise above *varṇa* prejudices, the law of theft exemplifies noblesse oblige at its best. "In (a case of) theft the guilt of a Śūdra shall be eight-fold, that of a Vaiśya sixteen-fold, that of a Kṣatriya two-and-thirty-fold, that of a Brāhmaṇa sixty four-fold, or quite a hundred fold, or (even) twice four and sixty fold."⁷⁴ In the same vein Kauṭilya also makes the selling or keeping as pledge of a minor an offence for which punishment was heavier for the higher *varṇas*—a Kṣatriya was fined three times and a Brāhmaṇa four times the fine imposed on a Śūdra for the same.

Together with the Brāhmaṇas the Kṣatriyas were the leaders of the society. It was not only the army and administration that the Kṣatriyas dominated, but they also vied with the Brāhmaṇas for the intellectual leadership of the society.⁷⁵ Right from the days of Lassen and Garbe the importance of the Kṣatriyas in bringing about an intellectual and religious revolution in the post-Vedic period has been generally recognised. That some of the famous Upaniṣadic teachers were Kṣatriya kings and that the founders of Buddhism and Jainism were Kṣatriya princes is common knowledge. The Kṣatriya's contribution to the intellectual life of the community was not limited to a particular epoch, the post-Vedic period, of Indian history. They continued to take an active part in intellectual life

almost on an equal scale as the Brāhmaṇas throughout our history. In absence of a Brāhmaṇa teacher even a Brāhmaṇa lad was permitted to study including the *Vedas* from Kṣatriya or Vaiśya teachers. The existence of non-Brāhmaṇa Vedic teachers is referred to by Manu also.⁷⁶ *Adhyayana* or study was as important a duty for the Kṣatriya and Vaiśya as for the Brāhmaṇa. In the Buddhist works we find princes of Kṣatriya families making long journeys to centres of learning like Takṣaśilā and Vārāṇasī and eagerly studying under the same teachers as the Brāhmaṇa boys. We have already discussed above the various subjects a future ruler was expected to master. Manu, Yājñavalkya and Kauṭilya all state that a king should be proficient in the three Vedas, metaphysics, politics and economics (*daṇḍanīti, vārtā*). That the Kṣatriyas were not mere soldiers devoid of intellectual interests is suggested by various evidences. In the *Śāntiparvan* Bhīṣma explained the science of politics with all its intricacies and minute details to Yudhiṣṭhira. Kosāmbī has suggested that such political thinkers as Bāhudantīputra Kauṇapadanta, Piśuna, Viśālakṣa, Vātavyādhi were Kṣatriyas and that the main Kṣatriya school of political philosophy was known as Āmbhī.⁷⁷ It was not the science of politics, to which the ruling aristocracy would be naturally drawn, that alone absorbed the intellectual interest of the Kṣatriyas. The *Bhagavad Gītā* was the product of a philosophical discussion between Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa, both Kṣatriyas. In the *Milindapañha* we find king Milinda making subtle and searching questions and holding discussion on an equal level with Nāgasena. It is quite

possible that in actual life Bhīṣma, Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna or Mīlinda were not as great intellectuals as they had been made to appear but these instances at least prove that such an intellectual image of Kṣatriya princes was quite acceptable to the people of India. Even in the historical period we find a number of instances of rulers being lavishly praised for their intellectual accomplishments.⁷⁸

Economically the Kṣatriyas, as we have hinted above, belonged to the prosperous section of society. Paid well in the army and getting tax relief as officers of the state, the Kṣatriyas led a life of ease and luxury.⁷⁹ However, there were poorer Kṣatriyas too. In the *Jātakas* we find instances of some impoverished Kṣatriyas earning livelihood by manual labour. Manu says that a prosperous Brāhmaṇa should charitably employ a poor Kṣatriya.⁸⁰ That during the time of distress a Kṣatriya was allowed to adopt the Vaiśya's mode of living also indicates that there were some Kṣatriyas who failed to earn livelihood through their traditional occupations. Generally speaking, however, the Kṣatriyas appear to have been in a sound economic position. A section which was politically influential must have reaped some economic advantages too and received state patronage. Even though direct evidence is not easily available, it is a permissible conjecture that a sizable portion of big land holders must have belonged to the Kṣatriya *varṇa*. However, it could not have been the entire *varṇa* that held a dominant position ; it was the small section which supplied the higher grade of officers to the army and civil administration that was influential, and not an ordinary Kṣatriya who, coming to the house of a well-to-do Brāhmaṇa was, treated not as a guest but was charitably fed.

CHAPTER IV

VAIŚYAS

To determine the position of the Vaiśya in the social hierarchy is more difficult than determining the position of the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas, the reason being twofold in nature. Firstly, the Vaiśyas, who originally constituted the mass of the Āryan society, were a rather amorphous group and retained a sort of fluid character for the greater part of ancient period. They could not crystallize into a compact social group like the first two *varṇas*. The border lines and contours of this class remained nebulous because there was no positive attribute which would firmly demarcate them from other *varṇas*. The statement perhaps needs amplification. Certain economic functions like agriculture, cattle rearing and trade, etc., have of course been attributed to the Vaiśyas, but many of these professions were peculiar to the Śūdras as well. Because of obvious economic reasons the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas were not averse to adopting these professions either. Since economic functions formed the basis of the Vaiśya *varṇa*, with the development of economy and specialisation of labour the *varṇa* lost its cohesion even further. The picture becomes still hazier with the rise of the various professional groups, in spite of the laboured attempts at rationalization of the phenomenon in the *Sūtras* and the *Smṛtis*. Secondly, the Vaiśyas seem to have received very little attention from the social theorists in ancient India. In the *Sūtras* and the *Smṛtis* even

the rights and duties of the Śūdras are dealt with in greater detail than those of the Vaiśyas. What could have been the reasons for this negligence of the Vaiśyas? Neither their number, as the Vaiśyas constituted the common folk (*Viś*), their number could not have been negligible,¹ nor their importance, they must have exercised a large measure of control over the economy, warranted such negligence. The explanation perhaps has to be sought for again in the elusive character of the class.

To understand the position of the Vaiśyas in the social scheme, it is necessary to look at their historical evolution. In view of the fact that very little work has been done on the rise of the Vaiśyas a rapid survey of the growth and formation of the *varṇa* from the *Vedic* to our period is attempted below. In the early Vedic period, with its tribal economy and with no greatly developed idea of specialisation of labour, social divisions were far from distinct and rigid. The ordinary social division was between the Āryan conquerors and the vanquished non-Āryans. Within the Āryan community the earliest groups to assume class character were the priestly order (Brāhmaṇas) and the warriors (Kṣatriyas). The rest of the Āryan population came to be given the comprehensive term *Viś* or common people. The *R̥gveda* states that the *Viś* bow spontaneously to the *Rājan* who is preceded by Brāhmaṇa. These three, the priests, the nobility and the commoners, constituted the main divisions of the Āryan community. The idea of a clear-cut fourfold division of society, the axis of the later day Hindu theory of *varṇa*, did not develop before the *puruṣasūkta*, which is admittedly a late interpolation and

might have been contemporaneous with the 'second grand divisions' of the *Atharvaveda*. Interestingly enough, in the *Rigveda* it is in the *puruṣasūkta* alone that such terms as Rājanya, Vaiśya and Śūdra are found.

The word *Viś* in the *Vedas* has been used in different senses. But in the majority of passages the word meant the common folk or the subject population.² Originally the *Viś* seems to have comprised the mass of the Aryan population, who belonged neither to the priestly class nor to the nobility; they were the commoners. In a number of passages a contrast is made between the *Viś* and the *Rājan*. The *Viś* is described as paying obedience to the king, taking refuge upto the king or bringing tribute to the king. In the *Atharvaveda* we find prayers to make the king the lord of the *Viś* and the sole ruler of the people. At the same time some other passages give advice to the king to make himself desirable to the people. Protected by the king the common folk followed their vocations, mainly agricultural and pastoral. In their turn they had to pay tribute to the king.

It was the *Viś* who formed the material basis of the society, supplying it with its economic necessities. The major occupation of the common folk was agriculture, though the pastoral economy to certain extent continued. Some of them must have engaged in trade and commerce too, as far as the economy permitted. The Paṇis, who were rich and entitled to perform sacrifice, though, they did not pay *dakṣiṇā* to the Brāhmaṇas, did not make offerings to the gods and are censured in the *Vedas*. They might have been the prosperous members of the *Viś* and probably

represented the commoners resentment against the pretensions of the Brāhmaṇas.³ Any way, there is little doubt that the productive activities of the Vedic society were carried on almost exclusively by the *Viś*. They were the feeders of the society. Thus in the literature of the later period they are described as tributary to other (*anyasya bhalikṛt*), to be lived on by other (*anyāsyādyah*) and fit to be eaten.⁴ Though engaged primarily in economic activities, at the time of war the *Viś* must have supplied the bulk of the fighting force under the leadership of the Kṣatriyas.⁵ It is not at all unlikely that some of the non-Aryans, who gave up their hostility to the conquering Aryans, were accepted into the fold of the *Viś*. At quite a few places the Ṛik Samhitā speaks of the *Dāsaviśas*.

The class of the artisans and craftsmen practising various crafts, who were gradually emerging along with the priests and war-leaders into distinct social groups when social differentiation had set in the early Vedic society, also belonged to the *Viś*. Professor R. S. Sharma has pointed out that the common words for weaver, farmer, carpenter in the Indo-European languages suggest their Indo-European origin.⁶ Carpenter is frequently referred to in the *Ṛgveda*. *Rathakāra*, though not mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*, is given a position of importance along with *karmāra* in the *Atharvaveda* in connection with the selection of king. The king sought the help of the artisans and they are put on a par with the king, the king makers and the *grāmaṇī*. From these we may conclude safely that the artisans enjoyed an honourable social status in the early

Vedic society, a status which is in sharp contrast to the degraded position assigned to them in the literature of the later period.

With the beginning of the later Vedic period, the period covered by the *Yajus saṁhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*, compartmentalization of the society proceeded further. On the one hand, the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Kṣatriyas* grew into the dominant sections of the society claiming a number of political and social privileges,⁷ on the other hand, the *Śūdras*, who doubtlessly included a large number of non-Aryan aboriginals, were slowly absorbed into the social scheme as the fourth *varṇa*. Pushed from above by the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Rājanya-Kṣatriyas* and pressed by the *Śūdras* from below, the loosely formed *Viś* of the early-Vedic society developed into the *Vaiśya varṇas*, desperately trying to keep their separate identity against the inroads of the *Śūdras* with whom they shared a great deal of functional similarities.⁸ Finding the occupational distinction between themselves and the *Śūdras* not wide enough, the *Vaiśyas* strove to maintain their superiority on ritualistic and sacramental differences. This superiority of the *Vaiśyas*, in the matters of religious rights over the *Śūdras*, was probably granted by the Brahmanical priests on the recognition of the fact that the *Vaiśyas* originally belonged to the conquering Aryan race, whereas the *Śūdras* did not. However, with the appropriation of special privileges, both religious and secular, by the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Kṣatriyas* there was a tendency clearly noticeable in the liturgical works to exclude the *Vaiśyas*, like the *Śūdras*, from a number of religious rites. This tendency to equate the

Vaiśyas with the Śūdras is more pronounced in the literature of the *Śukla Yajurveda*.

Primarily, the Vais'ya was an agriculturist ; cultivation and cattle rearing were his main occupations. The *Taittiriya Sainhitā*, e.g., says that the Vaiśyas were created along with the *Jagāti* metre, the *Viśvedevas* and cows. "Therefore are they to be eaten for they were created from the receptacle of food." Similarly the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* writes, "the Vaiśya is connected with the *jagāti*, the cattle are connected with the *jagāti*, verily thus with cattle he makes him prosper."⁹ Because of his association with food production a Vaiśya was described as 'nourisher' (*posayisṇuh*). Pūṣan, along with the Viśvedevas and the Maruts (peasant gods), is associated with the Vaiśyas in the *Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa*. In the *puruṣamedha* a Vaiśya was to be sacrificed to the Maruts. A ceremony in the *rājasūya* also probably indicates the Vaiśya's connection with food production.¹⁰

With a further development of the economy during this period, the class of artisans increased both in number and in diversity. The list of victims to be sacrificed in the *puruṣamedha* includes a large number of persons practising various crafts. What was the position of this class in the social set up of the period is difficult to determine. During the early-Vedic period—before the fourth *varṇa*, the Śūdras, came into existence—the artisans belonged to the *Viś*. But with the formation of the Śūdra *varṇa* the status of the artisans underwent some changes necessitating fresh adjustments to the new social situation. This became particularly necessary as many of the Śūdras also followed crafts and industries as their vocations. According to the *Jaim.*

Brāhmaṇa, as a result of the *aśvamedha* sacrifice a Śūdra becomes an expert worker. Sharma has adduced arguments to show that *rathakāra*, *takṣan*, *govikartana*, *palagala*, etc., who are counted among the *ratnins* or the jewels of the state, belonged to the Śūdra *varṇa*. That agriculture and cattle rearing were not the exclusive preserve of the Vaiśyas is amply clear. A Śūdra could be prosperous and owner of many cattle. In the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* the Śūdra is called *pūṣan* or nourisher, an obvious reference to the Śūdra's association with food production. Similarly in the *rājasūya* sacrifice the sacrificer had to offer a pot of beans to the Śūdra and purchase longevity with it. We might be allowed to conclude that during the initial stages of social integration between the Arayns and the non-Aryans, the occupational distinction between the *Viś* and the Śūdras became very thin.

In sacred matters, however, the Vaiśya was accorded a superiority over the Śūdras. He was allowed a greater participation in religious life than the Śūdra. A Śūdra was considered unfit for sacrifice, at the *agnihotra* he was even prohibited to milk the cow for the milk required for oblation. Some texts even go to the length of prohibiting a *consecrated man* for performing sacrifice (*dikṣita*) from speaking to a Śūdra. A Śūdra was not admitted to drink *soma*. There were no such restrictions in case of the Vaiśya. He was given the right to perform sacrifice and to take part in the religious life of the society. In the *rājasūya* a Vaiśya could ask for a place of sacrifice to the king, and could participate in the sprinkling ceremony. By the end of the later-Vedic period the Śūdras came to be denied the

right of *upanayana*. The right to initiate was never denied to the Vaiśyas. A famous student is the glory of the Brāhmaṇas, the rājanyas and the Vaiśyas according to the *Chāndogya Upaniṣada*.

But even in regard to religious life, the position of the Vaiśyas was far from equal to that of the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas. Some texts exclude the Vaiśyas along with the Śūdras from a number of rites and show a tendency to treat them on the same footing. A passage in the Yajus collection states that the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras were created together. In the texts of the black Yajus, in a rite in the *rājasūya* the Brāhmaṇa, the Rājanya, the Vaiśya and the Śūdra all participate in a game of dice, in which the king wins to get the cow which is the prize.¹¹ The later versions of the rite in the white Yajus texts, on the other hand, exclude the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras as competitors for the cow staked by king's kinsmen which is now won for him by the *adhvaryu* priest.¹² According to the *Śāṅkhyāna Śrauta Sūtra* the *vājapeya* was as much a sacrifice for the Vaiśya as for the Brāhmaṇa and Rājan. The *Vāraha Śrauta Sūtra*, however, excludes the Vaiśyas from the *vājapeya* along with the Śūdras. Prayers for the protection of the two upper classes, where no mention is made of the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras, are found quite frequently in the *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*. The prevailing sentiment, at least of the priestly circle, is best expressed in the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* which states that one who is neither Kṣatriya nor *purohita* is not complete. Marriage between the Vaiśya and the Śūdra was recognised as normal.¹³

We find, therefore, that the occupational difference

between the Vaiśya and the Śūdra was gradually narrowing down; and although the Vaiśya continued to enjoy a superiority in the matters of religion and rites over the Śūdra, even in these areas his position had taken a downward course and a section of the Brāhmanical priests were trying to push him down to the level of the Śūdras. An assessment of the relative position of the Vaiśya and the Śūdra in the religious life of the community remains incomplete without a look at the religious rights accorded to some members of the artisan sections of the society. As for the right to perform a sacrifice, a *rathakāra*, for example, enjoyed distinct superiority over the Śūdra. He could establish fire for sacrifice, and perform sacrifice during the rainy season. The *rathakāra* is given the fourth place in the enumeration of social groups, after the Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and the Vaiśya. In the *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra* the place of the *rathakāra* is taken by the *upakṛusta* which, according to the commentators, means *takṣaka* or carpenter. The *Baudh āyan Gṛhya Sūtra* allows *upanaṣana* to the *rathakāra*.¹⁴ We have already referred to the honourable position of the carpenter, the *rathakāra*, and the smith in the Atharvavedic polity. From these it appears that the artisans like *rathakāra*, *takṣaka*, *karmāra*, etc., belonged to the Vaiśya *varṇa*. But because of the specialised nature and the importance of their trade, these vocational groups were slowly crystallising into distinct castes and were falling apart from the parent body of the Vaiśya *varṇa*. Their social status, however, remained the same as that of the Vaiśyas. Thus we find in the matters of rites and sacraments they enjoyed more or

less the same privileges as the Vaiśyas. It is only when a bias developed against manual labour and as more and more of the Śūdras took to these professions during the next period, that the position of the artisan classes declined. As arts and crafts, presumably, demanded more skill than tilling, in the early-Vedic economy the artisans were perhaps economically better off than the cultivators. But their economic status also perhaps declined during the next period with the growth of big landholders and the development of trade and commerce and the consequent creation of a moneyed class. The privileged position once held by the artisans among the 'commoners' (non-priestly and non-warrior VĪŚ) had to be gradually surrendered to the rising bourgeoisie.

The post-Vedic period (ranging roughly from 600 to 300 B.C.) that produced the *Dharmasūtras*, the principal *Grhyasūtras*, the grammar of Pāṇini, the Buddhist *suttas* and the *Vinayapiṭaka*, the Jain canonical works, etc., ushered in a remarkable change in the social position of the Vaiśyas. This came as a consequence of the startling economic changes that took place as the Vedic period ended. "The growth of towns and commerce and the organisation of trade and craft into guilds make the social landscape of this age quite distinct from that of the preceding period."¹⁵ The introduction of money and greater production brought in, what one is tempted to term, the beginning of a capitalist economy.¹⁶ There started a tendency towards the concentration of wealth in a few hands—the large scale manufacturers, prosperous merchant class with business interests spread far and wide, and big landholders. Fabulously rich

merchants like Menḍaka of Aṅga, Anāthapiṇḍika of Kośala, and Ghoṣaka of Kauśāmbī are mentioned in the Buddhist literature. A *seṭṭhi* *gahapati* of *Rājagaha* paid as much as 100,000 coins to the physician Jīvaka as fee for a brain operation. In the Jain *Uvāsaga Dasāo* we come across a rich potter Saddālaputta who had numerous potters working for him and was in possession of five hundred potters' shops. The *Vinayapitaka* mentions weavers who supplied yarns to a *gahapati*. Obviously the *gahapati* was a manufacturer of textile goods and got his supply of yarns from the weavers. We also find *gahapatis* lending money to promising shop-keepers. The *Paramatthajotika* on the *Suttanipāta* I. 11, describes a *seṭṭhi*'s son who owned no less than 30,000 cattle and a big estate managed by a gang of slaves and hired workmen. *Gahapati* Menḍaka had to engage as many as 1250 cow-keepers in his farm.¹⁷ Merchant princes like Anāthapiṇḍika also had big landed estates besides their mercantile interests.

These new economic factors caused a further breach in the composition of the commoners or *Viś* who had already been designated in the Brahmanical social hierarchy by the generic term *Vaiśya*.^{*} A wedge was driven between the rising capitalists and the artisan class by the conflicting economic interests. The artisan, who in the earlier period was the master of his own trade and the profit thereof, in the changed economic situation of the post-Vedic period was threatened to be reduced to the position of wage earner. It is not unlikely that the craft guilds, which from available evidences appear to have been the products of this period, were actually formed to protect the economic interests of

the artisans against the competition of the emerging capitalists. If this was the motive behind their formation, the guilds appear to have achieved considerable success. The guild master (*jetthaka*) was not only a man of substance, but was also an influential figure in the royal court. Customs and usages of the guilds had the sanctity of law recognised by the state. However, despite the formation of guilds many of the artisans must have been forced to take employment as wage earners. Even those who continued to practise their crafts independently were not very well off. A village-potter or carpenter or smith was anything but wealthy. His life was hard and full of struggle. The *Vinaya* states that the life of the poor is evil compared to the life of the rich ; the life of the unwealthy is evil compared to the life of the wealthy ; the life of mankind is evil compared to the life of the *devas*.¹⁸ The *Dharma-sūtra* rules that the artisans were to work free of wages for the king for one day every month in lieu of taxes, suggest that normally the artisans were not prosperous enough to make cash payments. On workman's wages a man could live only from hand to mouth.¹⁹

A big gap was thus created between the wealthy traders and landholders on the one hand, and the small artisans and poor wage earners on the other. Although the traditional lists of the Vaiśya's functions, agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade are repeated in the works of this period, in reality, the abler and the more prosperous members of the community were gradually giving up agriculture and farming and were taking to the more lucrative professions of trade and commerce. The enumera-

tion of the comparative merits and demerits of agriculture and trade by the Buddha perhaps explains the reason why many Vaiśyas felt the lure of trade against agriculture. Agriculture, he said, was an occupation which, if successful, yielded great profit but demanded many duties, large administration, and involved great problems. On the other hand, trade demanded far less duties, administration and problems, and yet brought large profits.²⁰ Not a few of the Vaiśyas turned into big landholders. For their income they did depend on agriculture and cattle-rearing, but like the Brāhmaṇa or Kṣatriya landholders they engaged slaves or hired workmen for the manual part of the agricultural operation. Strictly speaking, they were not cultivators. The poorer section of the Vaiśya community, however, continued with the old professions. That a considerable number of the Vaiśyas were very much 'the tillers of soil' is clear from the *Dharmasūtras* which assign agriculture to the Vaiśyas. They were perhaps independent peasant proprietors, since, unlike the landless Śūdra agriculturists, they had to pay a part of their produce as taxes. Similarly, some Vaiśyas continued to follow arts and crafts for their livelihood. The *Anguttaranikāya*, for example, states at one place that the *gahapati*, who was a member of the Vaiśya order, lived by arts and crafts.²¹ Gautama's dictum that the Śūdra could make his living through 'mechanical arts too' seems to suggest that the mechanical arts were not counted among the normal professions of the Śūdras. At another place the same writer states that both the Vaiśya and the Śūdra should make their gains by labour.²²

Thus the poorer Vaiśyas were increasingly separated

from the richer ones and were approaching the position of the Śūdras. In the eyes of the Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, *setthis*, rich *gahapatis*, etc., there was little to distinguish between the Vaiśya farmers or the Vaiśya artisans and the Śūdras; they all followed the same functions. This attitude is reflected in the Brahmanical works in which regarding a number of matters the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras are equated. Gautama's statement that gain by labour is the special mode of acquisition for the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras has already been noted above. During sacrifice the Vaiśya and the Śūdra guests in the house of a Brāhmaṇa were to be fed along with the servants. This sort of treatment could be meted out only to the ordinary Vaiśyas—a poor craftsman or cultivator, and not to the *setṭhi* or his tribe.

Generally speaking, however, the attitude of the *Sūtras* was not particularly hostile to the Vaiśyas as a class. In the graduated scale of penal code the Vaiśya was accorded better treatment than the Śūdra.^{22a} A Vaiśya engaged in sacrifice is treated sometimes on equal footing with the Kṣatriya or even the Brāhmaṇa.²³ This perhaps reflects the attitude towards the prosperous Vaiśyas who had enough to spend on religious acts. In matters of food, purification and marriage also the position of the Vaiśyas was higher than that of the Śūdras in the *Dharmasūtras*. Food given by a Śūdra has been declared forbidden in several passages, but never that of a Vaiśya. The manner of purification for the Vaiśya was more thoroughgoing compared to that of the Śūdra. Taking a Śūdra wife was as much discouraged for a Vaiśya as for a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya.²⁴ Among the forms of marriage, the *gāndharva*, ranked higher than

the *āsura* and the *rākṣasa*, which were specially recommended for the Kṣatriyas, was considered to be the most suitable for the Vaiśyas.²⁵ Prof. Ghurye's statement, that according to Vaiśiṣṭha sons of a Brāhmaṇa by the Vaiśya and Śūdra wives were to receive equal shares of property, does not appear to be correct. The rule in question in fact does not include for consideration the son by a Śūdra wife at all. The rule speaks only of the sons by the Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya wives of a Brāhmaṇa father.²⁶ One thus finds it difficult to agree with R. S. Sharma that in matters of food, purity and marriage the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras were treated on equal terms by the *Sūtrakāras*.²⁷ We may conclude that in the *Sūtras* although there was a tendency to reduce the poorer Vaiśyas occupied with tilling and labour to the status of Śūdras, the Vaiśya varṇa as a whole was given a higher berth than the Śūdras. The attitude of the *Sūtra* writers may be summed up in the words of Vaiśiṣṭha : "A Kṣatriya shall pass through misfortunes which have befallen him by the strength of his arms, a Vaiśya and Śūdra by their wealth, the highest among twice-born men by muttered prayers and burnt oblations."²⁸ Wealth was thus the measure of social prestige for a Vaiśya and Śūdra.

The tendency noticed in the *Sūtras* are found more pronounced in the *Smṛtis*, the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya and later Buddhist and Jain works. We find the stock list of functions, trade, usury, cattle-rearing and agriculture, assigned to the Vaiśyas. But at the same time one also notices in some writers a sort of concern and uneasiness over the fact that many of the Vaiśyas were neglecting

cattle-rearing and agriculture. They were perhaps leaving these occupations more and more to the Śūdras and were adopting trade, commerce and financial transactions. It does not seem to be merely a matter of accident that in the enumeration of the Vaiśya's duties in the *Manusmṛti* agriculture comes last and is usually qualified by the expression 'and also' (*eva ca*).²⁹ That many of the Vaiśyas were not practising cattle-rearing and that persons of other *varṇas* were adopting it is perhaps indicated by the insistence of Manu that cattle-rearing was an occupation specially ment for the Vaiśyas, that a Vaiśya should never conceive the wish of not keeping cattle and that if the Vaiśyas were willing to keep cattle persons of no other class should keep them. The impression is strengthened further from the dictum that the king should compel the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras to perform their duties, lest the whole world be thrown into confusion.³⁰ Elaborating on the Vaiśya's functions, Manu speaks at greater length of the necessity for knowledge pertaining to trade and commerce than agriculture. A Vaiśya was expected to be well versed in the respective values of gems, pearls, coral, metals, textiles, perfumes, condiments, etc.; to be an expert judge of the quality of commodities, the probable profit and loss on merchandise, the advantages and disadvantages of different countries; to be well acquainted with the proper rates of wages, the rules regarding sale and purchase, the manner of preservation and storing of goods, the various languages of people, measures and weights—in short, to have all the virtues of a trader. In comparison the knowledge of agriculture demanded of him is very moderate—the quality

of fields and the manner of sowing seed. Similarly, while allowing a Brāhmaṇa in times of distress the Vaiśya's mode of living, Manu devotes two verses to agriculture and ten to trade and commerce to explain which of the occupations of the Vaiśyas, were permissible to the Brāhmanas.³¹ It is clear that among the various occupations of the Vaiśyas, agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade (usually described by the term *vārttā*), Manu paid more attention to trade than to the other two.³² If Buhler's interpretation of the term *vārttā* is correct (see note 32), trade was the most desirable occupation of the Vaiśya according to Manu. Anyway, it can be safely concluded that trade, commerce and industry were drawing away a large section of Vaiśya population from tilling and cattle-rearing.³³ This section was obviously more influential and enjoyed greater prestige because of its prosperity. Tilling and cattle-rearing were left more and more to the care of the Śūdras, though the poorer Vaiśyas continued with these professions as before. Thus in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya *vārttā* has been assigned to both the Vaiśyas and Śūdras as their occupations. In the *Milinda-pañha* husbandry and care of cattle have been described as 'the business of other folks, ordinary vessa and suddas.'^{33a} These occupations were meant thus only for the ordinary Vaiśyas and not for the whole *varṇa*.

Large scale industry and commerce seem to have developed even further during this period. Evidence of specialisation and division of labour, collective organisation of trade through guilds, partnerships and combines the use of loans, deposits, pledges, credit instruments, etc., is found in the literature of this period. A new feature of the period

was the rise of what Ghoshal terms state capitalism—the entry of the state both as a big scale producer and trader.³⁴

Specialisation and division of labour were well advanced. A weaver, for example, did not have to spin, he received the yarn ready made and had to turn over the finished textile goods. His function was thus different from the yarn maker's.³⁵ Different types of works done by different categories of craftsmen in the goldsmith's workshop are described in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya.³⁶ Artisans were employed by large scale manufacturers and 'master artisans' on wage basis.³⁷ Labourers were required by some employers in very large numbers and were recruited through labour unions,³⁸ and such labourers were presumably needed for all sectors of production—agriculture, industry and trade. The labourers organised themselves into unions for better bargaining power against the rising capitalists. The wages were not to be paid individually to the labourers, but to the union as a whole which in its turn was to distribute the wages equally between the members. It proves collective bargaining on the part of the labourers. Combination of traders to bring down the wages of artisans fixed by the state was a made punishable offence of the first degree by Yājñavalkya.^{38a} The interests of the artisans against the employers and of the employers against the labourers were sought to be protected by the state. Wages were to be fixed according to the time and quality of work, or according to the current rate if the wage was not agreed upon beforehand.³⁹ A labourer was not to be unjustly deprived of his right to work or just wages. That sometimes the employers

recoursed to what these days is called 'laying off' is also indicated in the *Arthaśāstra*.⁴⁰ The artisans (*kāruśilpī*) also often combined together to pressurise the market and traders.⁴¹ Artisans' guilds also worked as a bulwark against the large scale private industrialists by securing work for member artisans and taking the guarantee of production. Trade and industry were thus showing signs of stress and strain due to the conflicting interests of the producers and labourers.

The state, craft guilds and large-scale private manufacturers together led to a tremendous growth of economic activities. The state maintained huge agricultural farms—worked through hired labourers, serfs and forced labour—large factories and mines and engaged in trade. The state had monopolistic rights over certain products. There were private capitalists of such means that they were in a position to compete with the state in trade and industry. The *Arthaśāstra* which gave a monopolistic right over mines to the state advised it to lease out the mines which were too expensive to work directly.⁴² This shows that there were private capitalists who had the necessary financial capacity to work such mines and the acumen to earn profit from them. Despite a very large measure of state control over the market—state both as law enforcing authority and a very large scale producer could influence the market—the business magnates could and often did, corner the market by withholding or releasing of goods. Bulk purchase of commodities by merchants, individually or jointly, needed the sanction of state authorities, as this could be used to corner the market.⁴³ These restrictions notwithstanding,

the traders, however, succeeded in bringing about such fluctuations in price levels that the state authorities were compelled to follow a price control policy and to revise the price schedule on every fifth or fifteenth day.⁴⁴ Such frequent changes in price line show how unsteady the supply was.

It is natural to expect that the traders who as a class were growing more and more prosperous, would secure a number of privileges. From their own point of view, economic privileges were the most important. In matters of taxation the traders appear to have received a favoured treatment: while the tax on agriculture was one sixth, one eighth or one tenth of the total produce,⁴⁵ the duties on merchandise was one twentieth of the profit;⁴⁶ and the rates of profit allowed to trade were by no means small—the *Arthaśāstra* allows five per cent profit over indigenous products and ten per cent over foreign goods. It is unlikely that the state was not aware of the financial capacity of the traders. In fact, the state was admonished to be constantly alert so that the traders should not make excessive profit by selling at too high prices, cheating the customers, or evading tolls and duties.^{46a} That agriculture was more burdened with royal demands than trade is indicated by Kautilya, who says that the king should protect agriculture which was afflicted with fine, corvee and taxes—in other words, various forms of state levies—while, in contrast, trade was to be protected not from state demands but from harassment by state officials.⁴⁷ During emergencies the king could levy as much as one third on agricultural produce, whereas the levy on commercial goods was to vary

between two to five per cent. It was only the small traders dealing in vegetables, cooked food, wood, bamboo, earthen ware, etc., who had to pay twenty per cent during emergencies.⁴⁸

This discrimination in taxation is a measure of the political influence of the trader class. The prosperity of the trader class is richly documented by the inscriptions of this period. A large number of religious donations and endowments were made by the traders especially to the Buddhist and Jain orders.⁴⁹ About ninety inscriptions in *Lüders' List* record various donations to religious orders made by the members of the mercantile community—*negama*, *vanija*, *śreṣṭhin*, *sārthavāha* and *gahapati*. Merchants (*negama*) from port-towns like Śūrpāraka and Kalyāṇa made endowments of money, land and construction of shrines to Buddhist *Vihāras*. A jeweller (*manikāra*) from Śūrpāraka made a gift of a cave to the Buddhist order at Kanheri. Some of the other gifts were : the construction and dedication of pillars, slabs, images, cisterns, caves, etc., and the endowment of money and land for the upkeep of monks. Out of the seven private land-grants in *Lüders' List*⁵⁰ as many as three were made by merchants—*negama* and *śreṣṭhin*.⁵¹ Three of the remaining land-grants do not contain either the names or the professions of the donors, and the seventh⁵² one contains just the name of the donor but not the profession. We find, therefore, that all the three inscriptions recording donation of land, in which the profession of the donor is determinable, were made by the members of the commercial class. It is a permissible conclusion that other than the members of royal families and

high officials only the rich traders had the prosperity to make donations of land. That these donations needed substantial amounts of cash can be deduced from the inscriptions themselves. The donors were not local residents and came from outside on pilgrimage, yet we find them making gift of such lands which lay in the vicinity of the monasteries to which the donations were made. Obviously these lands were bought for hard cash.

The prosperity of traders was greatly facilitated by India's highly favourable foreign trade. The flow of Roman gold, bemoaned by Pliny, is proved by the find of Roman coins from South Indian coasts. Goebel has suggested that the Kuṣāṇas were prompted to invade India because of their interest in India's trade with the Roman and Chinese Empires.⁵⁸ An ivory statuette of Lakṣmī of Mathurā school of art was discovered in Pompeii and a Buddha image in Heligo island near Stockholm.⁵⁹ The barbarian invasion of Rome dislocated this trade in the third century. Indian wares continued to be in demand in Rome, but the Persian and the Arabian middlemen, into whose hands this trade had passed, proved an obstacle to smooth trading. Procopius tells us that the Persian traders sold Indian silk at Roman and Byzantine markets at highly exorbitant prices. This led Justinian to open negotiations with Ethiopia for taking over this trade from the Persians and to supply Indian silk to Rome. He also fixed the price of silk at eight gold pieces per pound. There was thus a sharp fall in profits of Indian merchants and weavers. Many of the silk weavers were forced to take up other professions on account of the disruption of silk trade with Rome. The silk weavers

of Lata *viṣaya* had to migrate to Daśapur in western Malawa and seek new occupations.⁵⁴

However, the over all economy of the country did not suffer much from the decline of trade with the Western World. The economic prosperity of the Gupta period proves that. The loss of the Western market seems to have been more than redressed by the opening of South-East Asia to Indian goods. Indian maritime activities in the Pacific that had begun in the early centuries of the Christian era started bearing fruits in the fourth and fifth centuries.⁵⁵

It will not be out of place here to consider the meaning of a few terms like *gahapati*, *negama*, *śreṣṭhi* and *vaṇik* etc., and to determine their station in the social life. In the *Vedic Index* the term *grhapati* is explained as a household head. The definition of *gahapati* appearing in the *Vinaya* has been translated by Miss I. B. Horner as "he who lives in a house" (*yo koci agaram ajjhavasati*).⁵⁶ Wagle has, however, shown that the word *ajjhavasati* denotes some sort of ownership right and thus the *Vinaya* definition of *gahapati* would correspond to head of the family.⁵⁷ According to a second definition in the *Vinaya*, excepting the king, the king's servants and the Brāhmaṇas the rest were *gahapatīs*.⁵⁸ Here the *Vinaya* is probably echoing the old Vedic tradition of the composition of *Viś*. In the Pāli literature the term has been generally applied to wealthy landholders and traders. *Gahapatīs*, especially the *seṭṭhi gahapatīs*, were fabulously rich and enjoyed great social and political influence. Their prosperity and social position set them apart from the ordinary folk. In the social ranking they came next to the Kṣatriya and the Brāhmaṇa as the third most

important social group and looked almost like a caste.⁵⁸ But *gahapatis* most probably formed a functional group rather than a caste, since many Brāhmaṇas were also described as *gahapatis*. This much seems to be clear that a *gahapati* was usually a man of means.

During the post-Mauryan and pre-Gupta period, with the expansion of trade and commerce, the man of means was usually a merchant and thus the term *gahapati* came to denote a member of the mercantile community. Inscriptions of the period throw interesting light on this question. As many as thirty-nine inscriptions in *Lüders' List* refer to *gahapatis*, and the *gahapatis* are usually associated with commercial activities. In the majority of inscriptions only the names of the *gahapatis* are found;⁶⁰ in some even the names do not appear, only the title *gahapati* is given.⁶¹ But wherever a clue to the occupation of the *gahapati* is indicated, we find it pointing towards trade and commerce. A Kanheri cave inscription speaks of the establishment of a cave by a *gahapati* who was a merchant (*negama*). His father too was a merchant from *Kalyāṇa*.⁶² Another Buddhist inscription from Nasik described a *gahapati* as a merchant (*negama*).⁶³ Similarly, in *Lüders' List* nos. 1056 and 1073 the *gahapati* is described as a *śreṣṭhīn* and in no. 1062 as a *sārthavāha*. In other instances we find *gahapatis* as fathers of traders and bankers.⁶⁴ Siddhārtha, a *hairanyaka*, is called the son of a *gahapati* in an inscription from Amaravati (*Lüders' List* no. 1247). Another inscription from Amaravati mentions a *gahapati* whose name was Siddhārtha (*Lüders' List* no. 1244). If Siddhārtha of both these inscriptions is the same person then the *hairanyaka* himself was a

gahapati. The term *hairanyaka* has been translated by Lüders as treasurer. It is not improbable that *hairanyaka* stood for a dealer in gold or a goldsmith. In fact, another Amaravati inscription mentions a *hairanyaka* as the son of a merchant (*vaniya*) (Lüders' List no. 1239). *Hairanyaka* is mentioned along with *sauvarnika* in the list of various professions in the *Mahāvastu*. According to J. J. Jones's rendering *hairanyaka* was a shroff or a banker.⁶⁵ From the inscriptions enumerated above we may be permitted to conclude that the term *gahapati* meant a member of the commercial community.

Only in one epigraph in Lüders' List (no. 1121) is a *gahapati* associated with agriculture. The inscription in question, which comes from western India, speaks of the gift of a cave by one Sīṃhagupta, the wife of the ploughman (*hālakiya*) Rṣabha, together with her son, the *gahapati* Nanda. The use of both the terms *kuṭumbika* and *gahapati* in this inscription seems to be highly interesting. It appears that some sort of contrast was intended to be made between the occupations of the father and the son. The word *kuṭumbin* according to Sircar's glossary meant a cultivator or an agriculturist-householder. Fick, however, is of the opinion that there was no essential difference between the occupation of a *gahapati* and a *kuṭumbika*. In the *Jātakas* a *kuṭumbika* is found trading in corn or lending money. It is quite likely that during the earlier period the *kuṭumbika*, an ordinary Vaiśya, pursued the traditional functions of his *varṇa*—agriculture, trade and usury. During the succeeding period, as we saw above, the gap between the agriculturists and traders widened. In the inscription cited above

the father, the *kuṭumbika*, was a peasant while the son was a *gahapati*. Is it unlikely that the son discarded agriculture in favour of trade, and that the epigraph furnishes another example of the gradual sinking of the cultivators' rank among the Vaiśyas ?

The rendering of the term *gahapati* merely as householder is not justified by our available evidences.⁶⁶ A Junnar Buddhist cave inscription (*Lüders' List* no. 1153) demonstrates the inadequacy of the rendering. The said inscription records the donation of a *caitya* by the *dharmanigama* (translated by Luders as pious hamlet) of Vīrasena, headed by a *gahapati*. If the word *gahapati* is taken to mean a householder, we would be led to the queer conclusion that a band of ascetics of a religious order led by a householder made the gift of the *caitya* ! The word *dhammanigama* smacks of some sort of business association. Donation of the *caitya* by an assembly of the inhabitants of Vīrasena for religious endowments and piety under the leadership of a merchant (*gahapati*) appear more plausible. That the term *gahapati* connoted some kind of distinction is probably indicated by an Amaravati inscription (*Lüders' List* no. 1206). The inscription records the gift of the lay-worshipper Saṃgharakṣitā, the daughter of the *gahapati* Mariti, together with her brothers and sisters and her three sons. The inscription gives the name of Saṃgharakṣitā's sons but passes over the names of her brothers and sisters. She was, therefore, not unduly partial to her paternal family. Interestingly, however, she made it a point to mention her father who was a *gahapati* and maintained a complete silence regarding her husband or father-in-law.

This suggests that she felt more proud of her father's status than that of her husband's family. We also find some donors who referred to themselves as grandsons of *gahapati* (*Lüders' List* nos. 1171, 1221).

But for one difficulty Wagle's thought provoking suggestion that *gahapati* denoted a household head could be accepted. In the Buddhist literature the *gahapatis* have been represented as a social group and have been contrasted with the Brāhmanas and Ksatriyas. According to Wagle's definition the heads of Ksatriya and Brāhmaṇa households should be counted as *gahapatis* too. It becomes impossible to explain why the Buddhist writers should have thought of separating the heads of the families (of the Brāhmanas and Kṣatriyas included) into a distinct group and contrasting them with the rest of their kin. The fact that *gahapati* did not simply mean a householder or even the head of a household is indicated by the use of the term *gahata* (*grhastha*) in a pillar inscription from Karle, in the same region where *gahapati* was frequently used in the contemporary epigraphs.⁶⁷ It appears that *gahata* was the word in vogue for the ordinary householder.

The evidence of contemporary literature gives support to the suggestions made above. In the *Saddharmaṣaṇḍarika* both the terms *grhapati* and *grhastha* have been used. The term *grhastha* has been always used to denote a householder and in juxtaposition with the term *pravrajita* to heighten the contrast between the householder and the monk,⁶⁸ whereas the term *grhapati* has been used only for an exceptionally wealthy man, who is 'rich, wealthy, and in possession of many treasures and granaries'. A *grhapati*

was not just an 'owner of abundant bullion, gold, money and corn', but a person who had his money invested over a large territory, was highly successful in business, commerce and money-lending, besides agriculture; a person who dealt with hundred thousands of Kotis of gold pieces.⁶⁹ In the *Milindapañha* the merchant of Pataliputra travelling with his merchandise of five hundred wagons is addressed by Nāgasena as *gahapati*.⁷⁰

In the light of the above epigraphic considerations we may conclude that a *gahapati* was a trader. It may further be concluded that every trader could not claim the title of *gahapati*—a *gahapati* was a distinguished member of his community probably on account of his wealth and social position. A *gahapati* might have been the leader and the representative of traders in the village community.⁷¹

Like *gahapati* the interpretation of the terms *nigama*, *negama*, and *naigama* is beset with difficulty. In some Buddhist works *nigama* has been used in the sense of a settlement larger and more prosperous—'a big place with 80,000 shops'—than a village (*gāma*). Buddhalogists have rendered the term *nigama* variously. I. B. Horner takes the word *nigama* originating from *nadigāma* or village on rivers and developing into trading centres and market towns. Rhys Davids renders it as a town; and Mrs. Rhys Davids, as township. Whereas F. L. Woodward understands by *nigama* a district. According to A. N. Bose the difference between a *gāma* and *nigama* was one of degree. Wagle more or less agrees with Bose. He considers *nigama* 'as a large and complex *gāma*, a bigger economic unit'. In the context of a city, however, he says, the *nigama* was a

ward in the city, and *negama* was the ruling council of a city with members representing various wards.^{71a} In the *Jātakas* the word was used also in the sense of business quarter or trade route. The city of Mitilā, e.g., had at its four gates four *nigamas* where merchants (*setthi*, *anusethi*) lived. Often *janapada* and *nigama* were compounded. Compounding of *gāma* and *nigama* is also found.^{71b} Analysing the data from the *Bṛhat Kalpa sūtra Bhāṣya* Dr. Motichandra concluded that a *nigama* was a settlement of bankers and money changers. There were two types of *nigamas* : the first inhabited by bankers alone, the second included merchants engaged in other trades too (*sāṅgrahaka* and *asāṅgrahaka*).⁷²

A few coins were discovered from Taxila, bearing the legend *negama* on the reverse and certain names on the obverse. Palaeographically these coins have been dated *circa* third century B. C. Recently, another coin bearing the legend *negama* on the obverse has been collected from Kauśāmbī.⁷³ The Kauśāmbī *negama* coin, however, does not contain any proper name. Bühler was of the opinion that the *negama* coins were issued by merchant guilds. Similar interpretations have been offered by a number of other scholars, like Rapson, Allan, Mookerji, etc. K. P. Jayaswal took the *negama* coins to be state issues. While the *janapada* coins were issued for the corporate body of the whole kingdom excepting the capital, the *negama* coins were issued for the city merchant corporation. A gupta period sealing from Rājagṛha (Banāres) with the legend *negama* on the one side and *janapada* on the other, however, indicates that *janapada* did not perhaps exclude

negama.⁷⁴ D. R. Bhandarkar did not find justification for interpreting the word *nigama* as guild for which *śreṇī* was the accepted term in ancient India. While accepting the possibility that the word *nigama* may mean traders or merchants, he would rather attribute the *nigama* coins to city states. As Prof. Negi has pointed out, the collection in recent years of a substantial number of city coins, without indication of any connection with *nigama*, appears to go against the attribution of Bhandarkar. Moreover, the Nasik inscription of *Usavadāta*, recording the announcement in the *nigama sabhā* of royal endowments with investment in weavers guilds (*kaulika nikāya*), shows that *nigama* was not a city state. Senart's translation of *nigama sabhā* as the 'town hall' and Lüders' translation of *nigama* as town, appear to be inadequate. R. D. Banerjee has pointed out that it is very difficult to conceive of a town exclusively of bankers and merchants, etc.⁷⁵ The inscriptions lend support to Buhler's theory. The *nigama* seals from Bhita (near Allahabad) and Basarh also point to the same direction. A few of the Basarh seals contain either the legend '*śreṣṭhī kulika nigama*' or '*śreṣṭhī nigama*'. No less than 274 seals have: '*śreṣṭhī-sārthavāha-kulika nigama*'. The expressions *bhadranigama* and *dharmanigama* (Lüders' *List* nos. 1261, 1153), headed by *seṭṭhi* and *gahapati* respectively, indicate that a *nigama* was some kind of a mercantile association rather than a settlement.^{75a} The names of places where the *nigamas* were situated are also some times found (Lüders' *List* nos. 705, 1153). This further strengthens the view that a *nigama* was not a town, but an organisation. *Nigama*, therefore, during the Śaka-Kuṣāṇa and Gupta

periods was some sort of merchant organisation^{75b}—a guild or corporation—and had considerable financial and political authority.

A more precise determination of the nature and composition of *nigama* is extremely hazardous. Dr. Buddha Prakash's suggestion that *nigama* was the body of bankers and shroffs and that *sārtha* was the organisation of traders and that the members of *nigama* were called *śreṣṭhins*⁷⁶ is not fully borne out by evidence. Seals from Bhita and Basarh show that the *sārthavāhas* and *kulikas* also used to form *nigamas*. A *gahapati* also could be the leader of a *nigama* (Lüders' List no. 1153). The Nasik inscription of Usavadāta, referred to above, probably shows that the *nigama sabhā* was the assembly house of the guild of weavers. *Nigama*, thus, could have been formed by the weavers too. If *kulika* means artisan, the artisans also had their *nigamas*.

From the above evidence, we may surmise that the *negama* and *naigamah* were either the heads or members of a *nigama* i.e., an industrial or business corporation. Usually, a *negama* was a prosperous merchant. A Kanheri cave inscription of the Sātavāhana period records the building of a caitya by some merchants (*vāṇijaka*) for Buddhist teachers (Lüders' List no. 987). While the actual construction was done by overseers (*navakamika*) who were all monks, a *negama* named Aparenuka, a lay-worshipper (*upāsaka*), acted as the *samāpita*. It appears that the said *negama* was the representative, perhaps a leader, of the merchants who bore the cost of construction chosen to supervise the work. The various gifts and donations,

including cash endowments, fields, etc.,⁷⁷ made by the *negamas*, are proofs of the great financial capacity of this class. Several *negamas* figure as donors in the Bandhogarh inscriptions from Rewa belonging to the early centuries of the Christian Era. Some of them occupied highly influential position in administration. Bhabhata, the son of the merchant Ujha, was a minister.⁷⁸ There can be little doubt that a *negama* was a big business magnate.

Another very influential member of the mercantile community was the *seṭṭhi*. The words *śreṣṭhin* and *śraiṣṭhya* are used in the Vedic literature and indicated some sort of position of primacy. The *śreṣṭhin* might have been a leader of traders. In the Pali literature *seṭṭhi* was a very wealthy merchant, with far-flung business interests, sending out caravans from the east to the west or 'shipping his cargo across high seas'. Commerce was not his only province—he engaged in industry too, e.g., employing weavers for textile goods.⁷⁹ His fabulous wealth was expressed by the stock figure of eighty crores. The Rājagṛha *seṭṭhi* spent 200,000 *kārshāpaṇas* for his treatment. For treatment of his wife or son a *seṭṭhi* could pay the fantastic medical fees to the tune of 16,000 *kahapaṇas*. Loaded with jewels and ornaments, sometimes costing as much as 100,000 *kahapaṇas* a piece,⁸⁰ the *seṭṭhi's* wife was a 'show window' of his prosperity. Anāthapiṇḍika's gift of Jeṭavana to the *saṅgha* is too well known to need repetition. The *seṭṭhi gahapati* of Rājagaha presented sixty buildings for the monastery to the Buddhist *saṅgha*.⁸¹ There may be exaggeration in all these descriptions, but they leave clear impressions of the great wealth of the *seṭṭhis*.

Because of his wealth and his pre-eminence among the mercantile community-Anāthapiṇḍika was attended by five hundred merchants at the time of the dedication of Jetavana, and a term *anuseṭṭhi* a subordinate to the *seṭṭhi* is also met with the *seṭṭhi* was an important figure at the royal court rendering help to the king and valuable public service. Although not exactly a civil official, in the sense of the *amātya* or *senāpati*, he probably helped the king to frame his financial policy.

The question whether the *seṭṭhi* was the leader of a merchant or industrial corporation is difficult to answer. Five hundred *seṭṭhis* who attended the dedication of Jetavana were perhaps not all heads of corporations. Moreover, among them all Anāthapiṇḍika had unquestioned primacy, though he was described like others as *seṭṭhi*. The head of a *śreṇī* (*guild*) was known either as *jeṭṭhaka* or *śreṇīmukhya*. We have already seen that the leader of a *nigama* was not necessarily a *seṭṭhi*. The Basarh seals suggest that the *prathamakulika* was the head of the *kulika nigama*. It has already been pointed out that a *gahapati* as well could be a leader of a *nigama*. Out of twenty five inscriptions referring to *seṭṭhis* in Lüders' List only one (no. 1261) shows any connection with *nigama*. In the said inscription a *seṭṭhi* is described as the leader of the *bhadrānigama*. In two inscriptions (Lüders' List nos. 1056, 1073) a *seṭṭhi* is also called a *gahapati*; and in another (Lüders' List no. 1075), as the son of a *gahapati*. Similarly, Lüders' List no. 1001 describes a *nigama* as a *gahapati*. But nowhere has a *nigama* been described as *seṭṭhi* or vice versa. These make it difficult to accept Buddha Prakash's sugges-

tion that the members of the *nigama* were called *setṭhis*. Neither all members of *nigama* were *setṭhis* nor all *setṭhis* necessarily members of *nigama*.

The exact nature of the *setṭhis*' profession can not be decided. There is no justification for rendering the term *setṭhis* as 'treasurer'.⁸² Generally, a *setṭhi* is thought to have been a banker. In the Buddhist works, however, a *setṭhi* does not appear to have been just a banker, he engaged in trade too often, roving with *sātthas*. *Setṭhis* fitted out caravans and travelled to far off lands to sell their wares. Anāthapiṇḍika himself was a great travelling merchant. Banking does not appear to have been the monopoly of the class of people known as *setṭhis*. In most of the stories involving deposits, cited by Sternbach, we find the persons with whom the deposit was made were described simply as *vaṇik* or merchant.⁸³ A *setṭhi* was the foreman of the eighteen craftsman according to the Jain literature.⁸⁴ A *śreṣṭhī* could have been 'a banker or merchant or the foreman of a guild, and sometimes was mentioned in the list of king's officials and subordinates addressed by him while making a grant'.^{84a} In some cases thus *setṭhis* might have some connection with the revenue administration of the state. The affluence of this class is well attested by the large donations made by them to the Buddhist and Jain orders. That the *setṭhis* had a considerable say in the administration, is brought out very clearly by the Damodarpur and Paharpur plates where in the local advisory administrative council the *nagara śreṣṭhin* is mentioned first. In the Basarh seals of the *nigama* of 'śreṣṭhī-sārthavāha-kulika', *śreṣṭhī*, *sārthavāha* and *kulika*

are enumerated in the same order. If this indicates order of rank and precedence, then the *setṭhis* were the most influential section of the mercantile community.

Sārthavahās or caravan leaders were almost as important as the *setṭhis*. *Sārthavāhas* were big travelling traders—in the Buddhist works often the *setṭhis* and *sārthavāhas* were identical—leading cart load of wares for sale to distant countries. 'Caravans of five hundred wagons' struggling along slowly to their destination is a common sight in the *Jātakas*. For reasons of security traders moved in groups forming a *sārtha*. Sometimes this led to the formation of combination for trading too. This, however, was not always the case. The *sārtha* could be formed only for the safe journey, the member traders retaining the freedom to sell to their best advantages individually.⁸⁵ Any way, such caravans moved under a leader—*jetṭhaka* or *sārthavāha*⁸⁶—who exercised a good measure of authority regarding halts, routes, watering, precautions against brigands, etc. Sometimes big caravans had more than one leader. The rank of *sārthavāha* clearly implies pre-eminent position among the traders. Along with the *setṭhis* and *kulikas* the *sārthavāhas* formed the great merchant corporation in eastern India. We have seen that in the Damodarpur plates the *sārthavāha* was an important figure in the local administration. Interestingly enough, while the *śreṣṭhī* in the local council has been specified as the *nagaraśreṣṭhin* and the *kulika* and the *kāyasīha* as the first (*prathama*) of their class, no such specification was thought necessary for the *sārthavāha*. May it be suggested that normally there was not more than one *sārthavāha* in a city? In Lüders' List

twenty five inscriptions refer to *setṭhis* and ten to *nigamas* ; while *sārthavāhas* are mentioned only in three inscriptions. Similarly, in *Bhandarkar's List* *śreṣṭhins* are mentioned in four inscriptions and *nagaraśreṣṭhin* in three inscriptions (from Damodarpur referred to above); whereas the *sārthavāhas* are mentioned only in the three Damodarpur inscriptions. This is another indication that the number of *sārthavāhas* perhaps was not as great as the number of *setṭhis* or *negamas*. In the Jain works a *sārthavāha* "was considered as an important state officer who was expert in archery and administration and who with the permission of the king used to head a caravan with various merchandise".⁸⁷ In view of the great responsibility of the caravan leader, he was expected to be able (*pañḍita*), clever (*nipuṇa*), sagacious (*medhāvī*) and fully conversant with the road conditions. About the importance and financial power of the *sārthavāha* there is no room for doubt.

Vanija was a very comprehensive term—it included all shades of traders from the modest shop-keepers to the big business magnates like *setṭhi* and *sārthavāha*.^{87a} Puri's opinion that the merchants with 'stationary interests in shops' alone were called *vaṇik* does not appear to be correct. The travelling traders were also described by the same term. In the *Aṅgavijjā* even the dealers in fruits and roots have been termed as *vaṇija*.⁸⁸ Normally, however, a shop-keeper was called *āpaṇika* or *pāpaṇika*, and the term *vaṇija*, especially when used alone and not as the part of a compound word, stood for a well-to-do merchant. We have already mentioned that in most of the stories involving deposits, cited by Sternbach, the person with whom the

deposit was made had been described as *vanik*. Only a very wealthy person was fit to act as a depositary according to the *Smṛtis*. As many as twelve inscriptions in *Lüders' List* mention donations by *vanijas* or members of their families. In most of them, only the names of the merchants along with the places they hailed from are given. However, in an Amarāvati inscription (*Lüders' List* no. 1230), the merchant (*vaṇiya*) is described as dealing in perfumes (*gadhdika*). Another inscription (*Lüders' List* no. 1281) from the same place described the *vaṇiya* as the son of a *gahapati*. In a third Amarāvati inscription (*Lüders' List* no. 1239) a *heranika* (dealer in gold) was called the son of a *vanik* (*vāṇiya*).

Apart from the above terms *vaṇij*, *gahapati*, *negama*, *sāṛthavāha*, *śreṣṭhin*, etc.,—the terms used in a general way for business magnates—we meet a host of other terms for smaller merchants indicating the specific nature of their trade. A long list of such terms is given in the *Mahāvastu* in connection with the traders guilds at Rājagaha. The list has been quoted by a number of scholars and need not be repeated. A more or less similar list is found in the Jain work *Āṅgavijjā* (*Chap. XXVIII). Some of the traders mentioned there are : dealer in gold and bullion (*suvanna-kāra*), dealer in images of gold (*devaḍa*), dealer in wool and yarn (*unnavāṇiya*, *suttavāṇiya*), textile dealer (*dussika*, *vatthopajivika*), dealers in fruits, roots and corn (*phala-vāṇiya*, *mūlavāṇiya*, *dhānyavāṇiya*), vendor of cooked-rice (*odanika*), seller of meat (*māmsavanijja*), seller of bean (*kammasa vanijja*), seller of floured barley. etc., (*tappana vanijja*), dealer in salt (*lona vanijja*), confectioners (*apupika*,

khajjakāraka), dealer in green vegetables (*pannika*), seller of ginger (*singrevāniya*), dealer in perfume (*gandhika*),⁸⁹ etc. The more substantial (*sāravañtesu*) among these various merchants according to the *Aṅgavijjā* were the dealers in gold and superior metals (*herannika*, *suvannika*), in sandalwood (*chandana*), in textile (*dussika*), and jeweller (*samjukāraka*)⁹⁰ and the seller of the images of god (*devaḍa*).

Quite a few of these terms are found represented in inscriptions, e.g. *sauvarnika*, *suvarnakāra*, *hiranyakāra*, *hairanyaka*, *dhannika* (corn dealer) and *gandhika*, etc.⁹¹ The terms used for small traders can be multiplied, but is hardly necessary, as it will not serve any useful purpose. A long list of various articles sold by the Vaiśyas is given in Manu and the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya.

That a large number of Vaiśyas were taking to trade, in preference to agriculture, is clear from the above discussion. Even women were probably entering business. Records of donations by *Vanijinī* and *sārthavāhinī* are found in contemporary epigraphs (*Lüders' List*, nos. 1285, 1292, 30). It appears that they were not just wives of merchants. One of the inscriptions (*Lüders' List* no. 1285) from Amaravati mentions the erection of a coping stone by the *vanijinī* Siddhi who is described as the daughter of Candra of Vijayapura. The absence of any reference to her husband, in sharp contrast to the specific mention of her father's name and residence, makes it more likely that the donor was a female merchant rather than the wife of a merchant. Reference to the donor's husband is not made in two other similar inscriptions as well.⁹²

How far the Vaiśyas followed the occupation of artisans is difficult to assess. Kangle and Sharma have counted all artisans as Śūdras.^{92a} Occupations of the Śūdras, specified in the *Arthaśāstra* include *vārttā* and crafts (*kārukuṣilava karma*), besides the service of the twice borns. On the other hand, Manu restricts Śūdras' occupation to the service of the higher *varnas* alone. It was only during the time of distress when securing livelihood was impossible by serving the higher *varnas* alone, the Śūdras were permitted to take up crafts and industry as a mode of living. In fact, according to Manu, the mechanical arts (*śilpam*) was a lawful occupation for the members of all classes in time of distress.⁹³ Interestingly enough, Manu does not include crafts and mechanical arts among the normal callings of any of the four *varnas*. Sharma has pointed out that Manu exempted craftsmen and artisans from cash payments to the king, instead they had to render free service once every month along with the Śūdra labourers.^{93a} This, however, should not be considered a definite proof that all artisans were poor and Śūdras. We have seen that according to the *Arthaśāstra* both the major and minor artisans had to pay cash taxes to the royal coffer.⁹⁴ That some artisans were very prosperous is proved by the large donations and gifts made by them to the Buddhist order. It is not at all unlikely that some members of the Vaiśya community continued to practise the profession of artisans.⁹⁵ There are inscriptional indications for the same. A *hairanyaka* (goldsmith) was the son of a merchant (*vāniya*) (*Luders' List* no. 1239). A *manikāra's* (jeweller's) daughter was married to the son of a dealer in iron (*lohavāniya*) (*Luders' List* no.

29). A *sauvarṇika* (goldsmith) called himself a *Gotiputa* (son of a Gaupṭi) (*Lüders' List* no. 92a). From the generally slighting attitude of Manu to the artisans—the food of artisans was forbidden to Brāhmaṇas and the artisans were usually lumped together with the Śūdras—we may surmise that their social position was rather low. Mostly they belonged to the Śūdra *varṇa* or mixed castes, but not all. In fact, in a Jain text⁹⁶ the artisans were regarded as Aryans.

In consequence of the changing economy an increasingly large number of the Vaiśyas, especially those connected with trade and commerce, were growing very rich. The bulk of the *varṇa*, however, continued to follow the old occupations of tilling and cattle-rearing. Agriculture and farming still symbolised the Vaiśya's profession. In the court of law a Vaiśya swore his oath by his kine and grain and gold; and at the end of the period of impurity he became pure by touching his goad or the nose string of his oxen.⁹⁷ Unless he was a prosperous landholder—labourers engaged by agriculturists are mentioned by Patañjali and Manu—he had perhaps to do his own tilling. An agriculturist Vaiśya was normally an independent peasant proprietor and not a wage earner. It was only in times of distress that a Vaiśya was permitted to seek employment with a wealthy Brāhmaṇa, in jobs that were suitable and proper for his *varṇa*.⁹⁸ During times of distress the Vaiśya could adopt the Śūdra's mode of living, but he had to avoid carefully the acts forbidden to him. Medieval commentators like Govindarāja, Kullūka and Sarvajña Nārāyaṇa have explained the forbidden acts as eating the leavings of others,

etc. But the real clue to the forbidden acts for the Vaiśyas is perhaps supplied by Manu himself in verse VIII. 412 ; it is stated there that a Vaiśya even in distress could not be forced to work as a slave.⁹⁹ Anyway, we may conclude without much difficulty that a Vaiśya was rarely a hired labourer. Professor R. S. Sharma has further pointed out that while the landless Śūdra labourers were exempted from taxation, the Vaiśyas had to pay taxes, because they were independent peasant proprietors.^{99a}

Whatever economic difference there might have been between the landless Śūdra agricultural labourers and the Vaiśya peasant proprietors, functionally speaking there was little to distinguish the two—both were tillers of the soil. The tendency noticed in the earlier period to identify the poorer Vaiśyas with the Śūdras is found in a more pronounced form in the literature of our period. Manu asks a Śūdra failing to secure his livelihood by serving a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya, to secure employment 'even' (*api*) with a wealthy Vaiśya. The use of the word 'even' shows how grudgingly this concession was made ; and the concession was made only to the 'wealthy' Vaiśyas.¹⁰⁰ For the completion of a sacrifice the Brāhmaṇa could forcibly appropriate the property of either a Vaiśya who neglected his religious duties or of a Śūdra who had no business with religion'.¹⁰¹ The king was advised to see that the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras did not waver from their appointed functions, lest the whole world be thrown into confusion. In the law courts, the Vaiśya and the Śūdra witnesses were admonished 'to speak the truth' in more or less the same manner. No such admonition was thought necessary for

the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyaś. Vaiśya and Śūdra guests were to be fed with the servants in a Brāhmaṇa's house—in fact, they were not treated as guests at all.^{101a} It would, however, be wrong to take these statements as applicable to the whole *varṇa*, for these had bearing only on the status of the poorer Vaiśyas, whose social position registered a decline and approximated to that of the Śūdras.

At the same time there was a corresponding rise in the status of the upper Vaiśyas, the prosperous business magnates and landlords. The *seṭṭhi*, as we have noted above, was a favourite of the king and held a prominent position in the court. The Jain literature makes the *sārthavāha* an important state official. We have also noted the case of Bhabata, the son of merchant Ujha, who held the position of minister to a king.¹⁰² Puṣyagupta, a Vaiśya, was the provincial governor of Candragupta Maurya in Saurashtra. But the most complete record of the political power of the monied mercantile community is afforded by the Damodarpur inscriptions of the Gupta period. These inscriptions show that the district administration was carried out by the civil official (*kumāramātya*) in the company of the *nagaraśreṣṭhin*, *sārthavāha*, *prathama kulika* and *prathama kāyastha* (the chief scribe, who also probably acted as the Secretary of the Administrative Board of four Members). Basarh and Bhita seals of merchant corporations also indicate the close co-operation between the government and traders in eastern India during the Gupta period. However, it would be wrong to conclude that the influence of merchants over district administration was a temporary feature of the Gupta period confined to

eastern India alone. Two *śreṣṭhī* and the head *sārthavāha* are described as the members of the board (*vāra*) of administrators of the town (*sthānādhikṛta*) in a Gwalior inscription, as late as the tenth century A. D. (*Bhandarkar's List* no. 36).^{102a}

With money and political power at their command it was natural for the wealthy Vaiśyas to enjoy great social prestige. The awe in which a successful businessman was held by the ordinary folk has found a vivid representation in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, in the story of the chance re-union between the wayward son and the father, who in the meantime had become a multimillionaire. "Meanwhile, Lord, the poor man in search of food and clothing was gradually approaching the house of the rich man, the owner of abundant bullion, gold, money and corn, treasures and granaries. And the father of the poor man happened to sit at the door of his house, surrounded and waited upon by a great crowd of Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras; he was sitting on a magnificent throne with a foot stool decorated with gold and silver, while dealing with hundred thousand *kotis* of gold pieces, and fanned with a chowrie, on a spot under an extended awning inlaid with pearls and flowers and adorned with hanging garlands of jewels; sitting (in short) in great pomp. The poor man, Lord, saw his own father in such pomp sitting at the door of the house, surrounded with a great crowd of people and doing a householder's business. The poor man frightened, terrified, alarmed, seized with a feeling of horripilation all over the body and agitated in mind, reflects thus: unexpectedly have I here fallen in with a king or grandee. People like

me have nothing to do here ; 'let me go ; in the street of the poor I am likely to find food and clothing without much difficulty. Let me no longer tarry at this place, lest I be taken to do forced labour or incur some other injury'.¹⁰³ Even the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas would fain wait upon a wealthy merchant. There is hardly any doubt that wealth was the real measure of the Vaiśya's social status. "The seniority of Brāhmaṇas is from (sacred) knowledge, that of the Kṣatriya from valour, that of the Vaiśya from wealth in grain (and other goods), but that of the Śūdra is merely from age."¹⁰⁴

Keeping in mind this gulf between the wealthy and ordinary Vaiśyas, we may now turn our eyes to the rights and duties of the Vaiśya *varṇa* as given in the *Smṛtis*. In the order of *varṇas* the Vaiśvas occupied the third position. This, however, had relevance mainly to sacramental matters and to a smaller degree to penal code. For the early sacraments like *jātakarman* (ceremony after birth), *nāmadheya* (name giving ceremony), *niṣkramaṇa* (the first leaving of the house), *annaprāśana* (the first feeding with rice) and *cūḍākarāṇa* (tonsure), etc., no difference has been made between the different twice-born *varṇas*, only the child's name was to be so chosen as to bring out the central characteristic of the *varṇa* in which the child was born—auspiciousness for Brāhmaṇas, strength for Kṣatriyas, wealth for Vaiśyas and humility for Śūdras. However, we find a great deal of divergence in the rules of initiation (*upanayana*) for the different *varṇas*. The Brāhmaṇa was to be initiated in the eighth year, the Kṣatriya in the eleventh and the Vaiśya in the twelfth ; in case of delay the initia-

tion had to take place before the completion of the sixteenth year for the Brāhmaṇa, twenty-second for the Kṣatriya and twenty-fourth for the Vaiśya. Differences were made also in the staff (*daṇḍa*), clothes, girdle, sacred thread, etc., to be used by the students of different orders. Similarly, the *keśānta* (clipping of hair) was recommended for the Brāhmaṇa in the sixteenth year, for the Kṣatriya in the twenty-second for the Vaiśya in the twenty-fourth. Different modes of address and salutation were recommended for different classes. Realistically speaking, however, these differences had only symbolical and ritualistic significance—they represented a theoretical superiority of the Brāhmaṇa over others—and had not much practical importance.^{104a} The length of the staff held during the *upanayana* was surely not the measure of one's station in life.

Same kind of discrimination was made in the rules for purification. The period of impurity for the Brāhmaṇa was ten days, for the Kṣatriya twelve days, for the Vaiśya fifteen days and for the Śūdra a month. In other words, the lower the *varṇa* the longer was the period necessary for washing off the impurity (*aśauca*). Paradoxically, however, we find the statement that a Brāhmaṇa is purified by water reaching his heart, a Kṣatriya by water reaching his throat, a Vaiśya by water taken into his mouth and a Śūdra merely by touching water with his lips. In other words, the higher the *varṇa* the more thorough-going was the necessity for purification.^{104b}

Turning from the sacramental to the legal situation, we find the *Smṛti* rules reflecting class prejudices. However, the omissions and contradictions in these rules are so

numerous that it appears doubtful whether these constituted the actual legal code current in the society.

In order to complete a sacrifice a Brāhmaṇa was permitted to appropriate the property of those Vaiśyas who did not perform sacrifice.¹⁰⁵ However, the penalty seems to have been meant for the negligence of religious duties, an offence for which same penalty could be imposed on the Brāhmaṇa and the Kṣatriya¹⁰⁵ too. So the rule was not specially unfavourable to the Vaiśyas alone. Slaying a Vaiśya was a minor offence (*Upapātaka*), so was the slaying of a Kṣatriya or a Śūdra.¹⁰⁶ This rule held good only for the *prāyaścitta* (a religio-moral expiation for the sin committed) and not for legal punishment. The *Prāyaścitta* needed for murdering a Vaiśya was equal to the one eighth of the penance prescribed for murdering a Brāhmaṇa and half of the penance prescribed for murdering a Kṣatriya and twice the penance for killing a Śūdra. A Brāhmaṇa had to perform penance for three years for murdering a Kṣatriya, a year for murdering a Vaiśya, six months for murdering a Śūdra; alternatively, he had to give 1,000 cows and a bull, 100 cows and a bull, 10 cows and a bull for murdering a Kṣatriya, a Vaiśya and a Śūdra respectively.^{106a}

The rules for defamation and adultery are more interesting. For defaming a Brāhmaṇa the Vaiśya had to pay a fine of 150 or 200 *paṇas*, whereas a Brāhmaṇa defaming a Vaiśya was fined only 25 *paṇas*. A Śūdra defaming a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya had his tongue cut off, but for defaming a Vaiśya he was let off with only a fine, even though it was quite heavy. A Vaiśya defaming a Vaiśya had to pay 12 *paṇas*.¹⁰⁷ That these rules are incomplete is indicated by

the fact that nothing has been said regarding the defamation of a Vaiśya by a Kṣatriya or of a Ksatriya by a Vaiśya.

Offences of adultery have been treated more exhaustively ; but these too are not free from omissions. The law of adultery as given in the *Manusmṛti* is summarised in the chart below :

| <i>Offender</i> | <i>Victim</i> | <i>Punishment</i> | <i>Verse no.</i> |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|--|------------------|
| Brāhmaṇa | guarded Brāhmaṇī, unwilling | fine 1000 <i>paṇas</i> | viii. 378 |
| " | guarded Brāhmaṇī, willing | " 500 " | viii. 378 |
| " | guarded Kṣatriyā | " 1000 " | viii. 383 |
| " | unguarded Kṣatriyā | " 500 " | viii. 385 |
| " | guarded Vaiśyā | " 1000 " | viii. 383 |
| " | unguarded Vaiśyā | " 500 " | viii. 385 |
| " | unguarded Śūdrā | " 500 " | viii. 385 |
| Kṣatriya | guarded Brāhmaṇī | " 1000 <i>paṇas</i> puls shaving of head with donkey's urine. | viii. 375 |
| " | unguarded Brāhmaṇī | fine 1000 <i>paṇas</i> | viii. 376 |
| " | unguarded Kṣatriyā | fine 500 <i>paṇas</i> or shaving of head with donkey's urine. | viii. 384 |
| " | guarded Vaiśyā | fine 1000 <i>paṇas</i> | viii. 382 |
| " | guarded Śūdrā | fine 1000 <i>paṇas</i> | viii. 383 |
| Vaiśya | guarded Brāhmaṇī | All property to be confiscated plus 1 year's imprisonment. | viii. 375 |

| <i>Offender</i> | <i>Victim</i> | <i>Punishment</i> | <i>Verse no.</i> |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Vaiśya | unguarded Brāhmaṇi | fine 500 <i>paṇas</i> | viii. 376 |
| " | guarded Kṣatriyā | " 500 <i>paṇas</i> | viii. 382 |
| " | unguarded Kṣatriyā | " 500 " | viii. 384 |
| " | guarded Śūdrā | " 1000 " | viii. 383 |
| Śūdra | guarded twice-born female | loses everything including life. | viii. 374 |
| " | unguarded twice-born female | amputation of the offending organ. | viii. 374 |

In the law of adultery, we find, Manu made a great effort for equity and justice. In the case of a Brāhmaṇa offender, for example, no discrimination was made in the degree of punishment on the basis of the *varṇa* rank of the victims. Although, nothing has been said in this context regarding unguarded Brāhmaṇi or guarded Śūdrā, from the general tenor of the laws it may be assumed that the punishment was uniform—offence against any guarded female was punished by a fine of 1000 *paṇas* without any class consideration. The same principle was applied to the Kṣatriya offender also. Only when the female outraged was Brāhmaṇa was the punishment slightly varied. Curiously, however, a Vaiśya offender, according to Manu, had to pay a fine of 500 *paṇas* for violating any Kṣatriya female, either guarded or unguarded, whereas a Brāhmaṇa had to pay 1000 *paṇas* for offending against a guarded Kṣatriya female. Even for violating a guarded Śūdra female a Vaiśya had to pay a fine of 1000 *paṇas*. The inconsistency seems too great to be correct. Despite the fact that these laws of adultery are far from complete—a Kṣatriya offending against a guarded Kṣatriya female or unguarded Vaiśya

woman, a Vaiśya offending against a guarded or unguarded woman of his own *varṇa* or against an unguarded Śūdra female, etc., have not been mentioned at all—we may say that except for the Śūdra offender the rules were surprisingly free from *varṇa* prejudices, and that for similar offences practically uniform punishment was recommended for the members of the three higher *varṇas*. It is of course doubtful whether this was an outcome of a conscious attempt at justice and fair-play or it was just an accidental product of Manu's horror for caste admixture. Whatever the reason, these rules were by no means discriminatory against the Vaiśyas.

As mixed marriages could not be avoided, the *anuloma* marriage was recognised as legal.¹⁰⁸ Thus, the Vaiśya male could take wives from his own *varṇa* as well as from the Śūdra; the Vaiśya girl, however, could be given in marriage to suitors from any of the three higher *varṇas*. In the case of such a mixed marriage, a Brāhmaṇa's son by a Vaiśya wife could claim one-and-a-half of seven-and-half shares or two out of ten shares of his father's property. In other words, the claim of such a son did not exceed twenty per cent of his father's property, while the son by a Brāhmaṇa mother got as much as forty per cent. The share of the property of the son of a Kṣatriya by Vaiśya wife has not been specified, but his share could not have been equal to that of the son by a Kṣatriya wife.¹⁰⁹ These rules, thus, were flagrantly partial to the higher *varṇas*, but as the mixed marriages were exceptions rather than the rule. These did not really affect many.

It would thus be wrong to assume that the Vaiśyas were

among the down trodden of the society. Their actual social position was higher than their place in the *varṇa* hierarchy. The rich Vaiśyas were actually among the elite of the society with extensive economic and political power. It was not the *varṇa* position but money that determined the social position as far as the Vaiśyas were concerned.

CHAPTER V

ŚŪDRAS

On the lowest rung, theoretically at least, of the *varṇa* ladder were the Śūdras. Considered as sprung from the feet of the Puruṣa their duty was to serve the twice-borns, especially the Brāhmaṇas. Debarred from any participation in the social, political or intellectual life of the community, a Śūdra did not have even an absolute claim to his property. With practically no right to ritualistic purification he lay beyond the pale of the great sacramental and social laws governing the Hindu community and in that respect remained an outsider.¹ Yet, economic necessities made it impossible for the society to dispense with the Śūdras completely, since they furnished the bulk of the labour force to the society. The society needed the Śūdras but would not allow them full participation in the social life. Their position has been summed up in the *Smṛti* injunctions that the Śūdras were created expressly for the service of the Brāhmaṇas, and that they could never get emancipation from servitude and acquire an independent status as servitude was their natural state. And to cap it all, the Śūdras were asked to bear their low station without protest and "feeling of envy" at the happier lot of the higher-borns.^{1a}

A closer examination, however, necessitates some modifications in the dismal picture of the Śūdras' social position that emerges at first sight from our data. It appears that during our period the Śūdras were able to secure some

improvement in their social status mainly owing to economic factors. With the development of trade and commerce and the consequent withdrawal of a large section of the Vaiśya population to commercial pursuits, agriculture and crafts were left more and more to the care of the Śūdras. The political changes of the post-Vedic period led to certain developments in Indian society which were to prove especially important for the Śūdras' social status. The rise of the Mahājanapadas and later that of the Magadhan Empire brought practically the whole of India under one political system leaving very little room for the pre-Aryan population to continue to live undisturbed in isolation. The pre-Aryan population had to adjust themselves to the new situation and to find a place in the Hindu body social. The problem of integration that started during the Vedic period did not remain the same over the succeeding centuries of great political and economic changes. The war-loving Aryans were getting down to a more settled life. The rising states guaranteed a greater degree of security and stability and the extension and multiplication of economic activities. In the early Vedic period the Aryan craftsmanship was practically limited to weaving, forging of weapons, chariot-building and carpentry, which along with agriculture and cattle-keeping satisfied the economic needs of the semi-nomadic warlike society. With the beginning of a more settled life the society needed a larger number of crafts, and the pre-Aryan people with a longer tradition of craftsmanship were better equipped to respond to the demand. Crafts thus started passing more and more into the hands of the indigenous population. This perhaps explains the

gradual decline in the artisan's status from the later Vedic period. Moreover, as the states grew in size and population more land was being brought under cultivation. Agriculture also thus demanded a larger number of people than was hitherto necessary and it was not possible for the Vaiśyas, the class to whom the vocation of agriculture was allotted in the *varṇa* theory, alone to cope with the demand. To serve the growing needs of agriculture the society had to depend on that section of the indigenous people which were engaged in agriculture in the pre-Aryan society. The changing economic pattern therefore called for a faster integration of the pre-Aryan people into the fabric of the Aryan society.² In the early Vedic period the invading Aryans were contrasted with the pre-Vedic dāsas, whereas by the time of the *Atharvaveda* the contrast was made between the Aryans and the Śūdras.³ The old view that the Śūdras were the defeated indigenous people brought under servitude by the Aryans may not be fully correct, but it can hardly be denied that the composition of the Śūdra *varṇa* contained a substantial proportion of non-Aryan people. Thus already in the *Brāhmaṇas* we come across the view that serving others (*anyasya preṣya*) was the function of the Śūdras.^{3a} Manu merely repeated the old Vedic tradition that the Śūdras were created for the service of the twice-born, a tradition that had lost much of its validity by Manu's own time.

In a more realistic manner the *Arthaśāstra* (1. 3. 7-8) enumerates the Śūdra's occupations as service of the twice-born, agriculture, cattle rearing and trade (*vārttā*) and the profession of the artisan and actor (*kāru kuśīlava karma*).

The economic callings assigned to the Vaiśyas are practically the same as those of the Śūdras, viz., agriculture, cattle rearing and trade. The *Arthaśāstra* thus shows a greater awareness of the actualities of the situation—there was not much occupational difference between the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras. The most forthright statement on the question is to be found in the *Milindapañha* (p. 178) which attributes agriculture, trade and the tending of cattle equally to both the Vaiśyas and Śūdras. It appears that the basis of difference between the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras was not professional. While the Vaiśyas in addition to engaging in an economic calling had also the obligation of performing certain intellectual and religious duties like studying, performing sacrifice and making gifts (*adhyayanain*, *yajanañ* and *dānañ*), the Śūdras had no such obligation.

Even from the *Manusmṛti*, if one reads between the lines, one gets the impression that the Śūdra's occupation was not confined to the service of the twice-born. In fact, Manu's excessive insistence that the Śūdras were created solely for the service of the twice-born betrays the feeling that Manu felt sore about the fact that many Śūdras were stepping beyond the borders of the functions thought to be proper for them in the orthodox theory of caste. Along with this, such statements that accumulation of wealth by a Śūdra pained the Brāhmaṇas, that a Śūdra's property could be seized by the Brāhmaṇas⁴ and, finally, that the king should carefully compel the Vaiśyas and Śūdras to keep to their appointed functions lest the whole world be thrown into confusion, leave little room for doubt that some of the more adventurous Śūdras were striving to rise

above the low station of servitude assigned to them in the *varṇa* theory. Despite his dislike for it, Manu was forced to recognize the existence of the Śūdras who lived on their own.⁵ The *Purāṇas* also reflect the changing economic situation. It is stated that originally Śūdras were a timid and servile people, but when the Creator revised the whole scheme of creation Śūdras were assigned the occupations of craftsmen and manual labourers ; now even kings entertained them with favour.⁶ There is no gainsaying the fact that a great many Śūdras were leading an independent economic life.

The source of this economic independence is not far to seek. The professions of agriculture, cattle-rearing and craft were passing more and more into the hands of the Śūdras from those of the Vaiśyas. Śūdras practising agriculture are frequently referred to in the *Arthaśāstra*. The king was advised to establish new village-settlements consisting mostly of Śūdra agriculturists.⁷ In settling new villages the lower *varṇas*, because of greater economic return, were to be given preference to the higher *varṇas*. A predominant Śūdra population was considered to be one of the excellences of a country. In other words, Kauṭilya recognized the importance of the Śūdras for agriculture. It is also interesting to note that according to Kauṭilya in settling new villages preference was to be given to actual tillers of land over non-tiller landholders. Kauṭilya was therefore advocating a policy of allotting land directly to the Śūdra farmers and was against encouraging landlordism. That all the Śūdra cultivators were not just landless agricultural labourers is indicated by Kauṭilya's statement that

arable lands should be allotted to tax payers for life and that such lands should be taken away from those who did not till them and gave them to others, presumably on share-crop basis. At the initial stage new settlers were to be given assistance by the state so that they could gain economic self-reliance quickly and could become a steady source of state revenue. From a dispassionate reading of the first part of the chapter on the settlement of the country side in the *Arthaśāstra* (BK 2. Chap. 1) one cannot escape the conclusion that the chief concern of Kauṭilya in establishing new settlements was with the ways and means of habilitating the Śūdra agriculturists, who in his point of view were of very great importance for the state finance.^{7a} Whether habilitating the Śūdras economically was a conscious policy advocated by Kauṭilya, or he was merely reflecting the contemporary conditions we have no means to determine. Whatever it might have been, a conscious policy or not, it did have some impact on the socio-economic status of the Śūdras in the succeeding period. Seen in the light of Kauṭilya's policy Manu's statement (Manu. VIII. 22) that the presence of many Śūdras destroys a country acquires a special significance. It is tempting to suggest that Manu's statement marks a reaction against Kauṭilya's policy which was leading to a degree of economic independence of the Śūdras that was not quite to the liking of Manu. However, to come back to our main point, it is clear from Kauṭilya's evidence that a substantial number of Śūdras was emerging as independent cultivators who even paid tax to government coffers. Although Manu does not directly refer to Śūdra agriculturists, in a verse (Manu. IV. 253)

there is an indirect reference to Śūdra sharecroppers (*ārdhikah*). From the *Arthaśāstra* it appears that land was given to Śūdra cultivators for one generation (*aikapuruṣikāni*) only and that the tenureship was non transferable—even the son could not automatically succeed to that of the father. Moreover, the tenureship could be withdrawn by the state in case the cultivator did not till the land personally and in that case the land could be re-allotted. Whether these tenurial restrictions were applied to all *varnas* or only to the Śūdra, we have no means to determine. However, the employing of sharecroppers, which was not allowed to the Śūdra farmers, was resorted to by the state in its own farming.⁸ Thus a considerable number of Śūdras found employment with the state as sharecroppers receiving half or one fourth or one fifth of the produce. Their condition, not as good as that of the independent farmers probably, was quite good. Apart from these, a large number of Śūdra labourers and artisans were engaged by the state on wage basis in state farms and other undertakings. All these opened avenues for independent economic living for a large number of Śūdras. Many, however, were still subjected to forced labour.^{8a}

Apart from agriculture, crafts were another important occupation of the Śūdra. The *Smṛtis* and the *Arthaśāstra*, however, differ in their attitudes to crafts as a suitable occupation for Śūdras. Whereas the *Smṛtis* allow a Śūdra to maintain himself by practising a handicraft or mechanical art (*kārukarma, śilpa*) during the time of distress only, the *Arthaśāstra* (1. 3. 5-8) considers handicrafts to be a perfectly normal occupation of the Śūdra. In fact, in the

Arthaśāstra craftsmanship as an occupation has been associated only with the Śūdra *varṇa*. According to the *Manu* (X. 99, 100, 116) and *Yājñavalkya* (I. 120, III. 42) *Smṛtis* during times of distress members of every *varṇa* could adopt handicraft as also a few other jobs like working for wages, service, rearing of cattle, trade, agriculture, usury, etc.

That mechanical arts and handicrafts were usually practised by the members of the Śūdra *varṇa* is perhaps indicated by the verses VII.138, X. 120 in the *Manusmṛti*, which lump the Śūdras, artisans and mechanics together in the same category for matters of taxation. Though it is by no means unlikely that some members of the Vaiśya *varṇa* continued living by handicrafts, the majority of artisans belonged to the Śūdra *varṇa*.⁹ Not a few of the craftsmen were, however, reduced to the rank of the mixed castes.

Generally speaking, the condition of most of the artisans, who were scarcely different from daily wage earners, was far from enviable. Presumably because the artisans were normally not rich enough to make cash payments, the *Smṛtis* exempted them from taxation. Instead they had to render free service once every month to the king.^{10a} However, all artisans were not poor. The formation of craft-guilds provided them with an economic defence against the competition and exploitation of the rising business magnates. Some craftsmen actually seem to have profited from the economic growth of the post-Vedic period which created demands for larger production and worked towards the economic advantage of artisans. In fact, the *Smṛti* rule that the artisans were to be exempted from cash payments was not perhaps strictly followed. According to

the *Arthaśāstra* the *maḥākārava* and *ksudrakārava* were liable to be taxed.¹⁰

A glimpse of the prosperity of a section of artisans is afforded by the Brāhmī inscriptions of the post-Mauryan period which record a large number of religious gifts and donations by various craftsmen and those who lived by manual labour. To name only some of them from *Luders' List* : *navakarmika* (architect ?), *āvesanin* (foreman of artisans), *karmāra* (blacksmith), *carmakāra* (leather worker), *dāśaka* (fisherman), *maṇikāra* (jeweller), *mālākāra* (garland maker, gardener), *rajaka* (dyer), *rūpakāraka* (sculptor), *lohikakāraka* (worker in metal or blacksmith), *vardhakin* (carpenter), *viśvakarman* (architect, mechanic), *suvarnakāra* (goldsmith), *sautrika* (weaver), etc. Even the domestic servant (*abhyaṅtāropasthāyaka*), the gardener (*ārāmika*), the labourer (*karmika*), etc., are mentioned as making gifts.¹¹ That it was not piety alone but also financial capacity which prompted these gifts is amply indicated by the inscriptions. A foreman of artisans (*āvesanin*) is mentioned making a series of gifts in as many as three inscriptions (*Luders' List* nos. 1202, 1203, 1204) and another artisan describes himself as the *āvēsani* of king Śrī Śātakarṇi (*Luders' List* no. 346). A Kankālīṭṭā (Mathura) inscription (*Luders' List* on. 53) refers to a *lohikakāraka* who was important enough to be a member of a *gothi*. Whatever the purpose and the composition of the *gothi* might have been, its membership—it has been mentioned with an obvious pride—reflected some kind of prestige. And according to the *Manusmṛiti* a blacksmith or a dealer in iron could not lay claim to much social prestige—his food was not to be

accepted by Brāhmaṇas.¹² Presumably therefore the membership of the *gothi* was offered to the *lohikakāraka* on considerations other than his social position.

There are a number of references to Śūdras owning property even in the *Smṛti* literature. The Law of inheritance gave a Śūdra the right to divide his property equally among his sons. Even a son of a Śūdra by his female slave could receive a share of his father's property if the father so desired. A Śūdra was asked to look after his servants well. Some Śūdras were thus so prosperous as to keep servants and slaves. The provision that a Śūdra's gift was not to be accepted by Brāhmaṇas presupposes some financial capacity on the part of the Śūdra to make gifts.¹³ It may be accepted without much hesitation that among the Śūdras there was a section which was quite well-off. Already during an earlier period, from Pāṇini down to the *Jātakas*, we find a number of references to artisans attached to royal households. The leader (*jetṭhaka*) of a village of blacksmiths was a very wealthy person and a favourite of the king (*rājavallabha*) according to the story of a *Jātaka*.^{13a}

We have no means to determine the economic condition of the artisan class as a whole or to make an estimate of the earnings of an average craftsman. An artisan attached to the royal household or a *jetṭhaka* certainly enjoyed economic prerogatives beyond the reach of the ordinary craftsman. For example, the *vardhaki*, who seems to have been the chief carpenter of the state, used to draw a salary of 2000 *paṇas* like the physician and the charioteer according to the *Arthaśāstra*. The *vardhaki* in question was not an ordinary carpenter but an important state official who,

along with the commandant, astrologer and other experts, had to select the sites for and arrange the setting up of army camps during war. In contrast to the *vardhaki* the ordinary artisans employed by the state were recommended a salary of only 120 *panas*. The chief carpenter thus drew a pay packet about seventeen times larger than that of an ordinary artisan.¹⁴ The determining of the wage of the artisans not in employment of the state is a much more difficult task. There are, however, certain indirect hints in the *Arthaśāstra* (4. 1. 10). The wage for weaving was equal to the value of the yarn for ordinary cloths and it could even go up to the double the value of the yarn for woollen cloths and other superior stuff. Since we have no means to calculate either the efficiency of an average weaver which in its turn would depend also on the efficiency of the loom used, or to determine the price of yarns and the relation of the price of yarns to the price structure of other goods, we cannot ascertain his real wage. But, if we are allowed to assume that there was not a very wide gap between the cost of production and the selling price,¹⁵ we may surmise that about 50% of the price of textile goods went to the weavers as wage, which should be considered to have been quite a high rate of wage. The fees for metal workers, especially workers of precious metals, as specified in the *Arthaśāstra* (4. 1. 32—42) also seem to have been quite high as the fees depended on the value of the metal worked on. The fees for working gold was 1/8th of the value of the article; for silver 1/16th; for brass, copper, etc., 1/20th. The prosperity of weavers and weaver's guilds is reflected in the inscriptions of the period. In the

Āṅgavijjā also the weavers have been counted among the affluent sections of the traders and craftsmen.¹⁶ But the wages of ordinary workers were far from high. A tailor or a washerman received between 1/16th of a *paṇa* to 1 *paṇa* for each garment depending on the quality of cloth and fabric (*Artha.*, 4. 1. 22).

The wage of unskilled labourers was even lower. Already by the time of Pāṇini a distinction was drawn between the skilled workers and unskilled labourers. Patañjali also distinguishes between the skilled workers (*śilpin*) who earned wages and non-skilled labourers (*dāsa karmakāra*) working for food and clothing only. In the *Āṅgavijjā* among the different categories of professions, state service, trade and commerce, agriculture and cattle-keeping, crafts, and manual labour, manual labour has been mentioned last obviously because it was the least rewarding.¹⁷ According to the *Arthaśāstra* (3. 13. 27—29), if the wage was not fixed beforehand a labourer was to receive 1/10th of the produce—an agricultural labourer was to get 1/10th of the crop, a herdsman 1/10th of the butter and a trader's assistant 1/10th of the sale. In case the master failed to pay wages, he was to be punished with a fine to the tune of either ten times the wages or six *paṇas*; and in case of misappropriation, a fine of twelve *paṇas* or five times the amount of wages. "On the basis of these rules we get two different rates of wages namely $\frac{3}{5}$ *paṇa* and $2\frac{2}{5}$ *paṇas*. Thus it seems that the daily wage of a worker varied from $\frac{3}{5}$ *paṇa* to 2 and $\frac{2}{5}$ *paṇas*."¹⁸ According to Manu (VII.125—26) the daily wage of a worker varied between six *paṇas* to two *paṇas* according to

his efficiency in addition to one *droṇa* measure of grain every month and clothes every six months. Patañjali refers to labourers working on a wage of five, six or ten coins. If the coin referred to is the same as *pañā*,¹⁹ then the rates of wage in Patañjali would not be very much different from those of Manu, since Patañjali's rates do not include the supplement of the cash payment by provisions for free food or clothing. In the *Yājñavalkya* (II.194) and *Nārada* (VI.2—3) *Smṛtis* we find the repetition of Kauṭilya's provision that if the wage was not fixed before hand a worker was entitled to 1/10th of the produce of grain, dairy products, and the proceeds of sale by a farm hand, a herdsman, and a trader's assistant respectively. The *Śānti-parvan* rule is more generous, for it awards 1/7th of the whole years crop and the proceeds of trade to the agricultural labourer and trader's assistant respectively.²⁰ The wage rules of Bṛhaspati (XVI. 1—2) are even more liberal. An Agricultural labourer (*sīra-vāhaka*), if provided with food and clothing, was to receive 1/4th of the produce; if not provided with food and clothing, he was entitled to 1/3rd.

The agricultural labourers that we have been referring to above should be distinguished from sharecroppers. While the former had to be supplied with seeds, oxen, etc., the latter had to arrange for seeds, oxen, and equipment themselves. According to the *Arthaśāstra* the sharecroppers of crown land were entitled to 1/4th or 1/5th of the produce. This has naturally led certain authorities to equate the *sīra-vāhakas* of Bṛhaspati with sharecroppers. But it appears that the *sīra* land was private land and it was not identifiable with the *sītā* land of Kauṭilya which

was owned by the state, nor the *sīra-vāhakas* should be equated with sharecroppers.²¹ It appears that the *Arthaśāstra* (2. 24. 16) postulates two categories of sharecroppers: (1) *ardhasītikas* who brought their own implements, seeds, etc., and retained half of the produce; (2) *svavīryopajīvins* who were provided with seeds and implements by the *sītādhyakṣa* and received 1/4th or 1/5th of the produce. In the *Manusmṛti* (IV. 253) also there is reference to Śūdra sharecroppers receiving half the share of produce (*ārdhika*).

In case of non-fulfilment of the terms of hire and non-completion of the work, the artisans and labourers were not only liable to the forfeiture of their wages but also to a fine which might be as high as twice the wages. Viṣṇu (V. 153ff) laid down even severer punishment. A workman abandoning work before the expiry of his term was to pay a fine of 100 *paṇas* in addition to the forfeiture of the wages. Even in case of illness, if the work remained slightly incomplete, the worker forfeited his wage. Yājñavalkya (II. 195) in one of the clauses allowed a slightly more liberal treatment. For not performing the work in time or causing loss in profit a worker of course had no right to his wage, but he could receive whatever the master would be pleased to give. In case of illness or a calamity falling on the worker, the *Arthaśāstra* (3. 14. 2) allows him the right to annul the contract. A porter allowing his load to perish or a herdsman causing loss of cattle through negligence had to make good the loss and also pay a fine. A herdsman causing damage to fields or crops was fined often heavily.

There were thus very strict injunctions to compel the artisans and workers to fulfil the terms of work they were engaged for. The *Arthaśāstra* opened the section on the suppression of criminals with a chapter entitled 'keeping a watch over artisans'. A washerman washing clothes on anything other than a wooden board or a smooth slab of stone, or if he was guilty of wearing, selling, hiring or pledging of clothes given for washing, was punished with fines. The weavers were required to conform to the standard rates of increase or decrease in their material in the process of weaving; and the metal workers were to observe similar rates of increase or decrease in the process of smelting.

These rules and regulations which might be termed as labour laws²¹ were not, however, devoid of all considerations for the workers. Although generally weighed against artisans and labourers, these laws nevertheless provided some protection of their interests as well. Fulfilment of the terms of contract was as much the duty of the employer as the employee. After making a contract to give work to a certain worker the employer had no right to engage any one else for that work (*Artha.*, 3. 14). Certain thinkers even went to the length of suggesting that in such cases if the employer refused to give work when the labourer presented himself for work the worker was entitled to the full wage.²² After recovering from illness if a workman completed the stipulated work even belatedly he was to receive full payment (*Manu.* VIII. 216). An employer causing a porter to abandon his work at the beginning of the journey or on the way was required to pay him a substantial

share of his wages (*Yāj.* II. 198). A trader's assistant earning extra profit for the master by his own personal initiative and skill was to be suitably rewarded in addition to his normal wages (*Yāj.* II. 195).

Despite the fact that vagueness and the divergences of our evidence do not permit us to determine accurately the wage position of the labourers, we may enunciate certain broad principles. The labourers were paid either in cash or in kind or in both. Among the landless Śūdra farmers the economic position of sharecroppers was the happiest. They received either half or 1/4th or 1/5th of the produce in accordance with their supplying or not supplying their own equipments, seeds, etc. Normally the wage of a labourer, presumably paid in kind, was 1/10th of the produce, which probably rose gradually to 1/7th, 1/6th and even to 1/3rd in consequence of the economic growth. Those who were paid in cash earned between two to six *paṇas* daily. However, there were certain categories of inferior farm-hands who received a paltry sum of one and one quarter of a *paṇa* every month in addition to free ration for four adults. A skilled artisan (*kāruśilpī*) earned about double the wage of an unskilled labourer (*karmika*).^{22a}

The developing economy thus worked as a double-edged sword for the artisans and workers. The more enterprising of the skilled artisans, who could withstand the competition of big capitalists²³ or could secure the protection of powerful guilds, reaped undoubted economic advantages. But many others were gradually sinking into the ranks of wage earners seeking employment with big traders and

industrialists. In a *Jātaka* story we come across a tailor earning his livelihood by seeking employment with a *seṭṭhi*.²⁴ The condition of the unskilled worker was the worst. Even the slaves (*dāsas*) doing menial jobs in the houses of rich people were comparatively better off than the unskilled workers. There were sundry job-seekers 'without any fixed employment who stood between vagrancy and starvation, who eked out a miserable existence by any chance engagement'.^{24a} In the *Milindapañha* the *bhatakas* are put among the very lowly work people, while the *dāsaputtas* stand in the best company.²⁵ A vivid glimpse into the life of the simple minded workers with its poverty and simple joys is provided by another *Jātaka* story about a water carrier. He was transported to a world of ecstatic delight by the thought of how he would be spending on a festive occasion half a *māsaka* which he had saved, together with another half a *māṣaka* which was the saving of his lady love—she too was a water carrier. "We will buy a garland with one part of it, perfume with another and strong drink with a third", decided the happy couple.²⁶ Strong drink was the best recreation that a labourer could think of and using cheap perfumes and garlands was the heights of luxury.

How far the Śūdras were liable to forced labour is a debatable question. Whereas usually the modern writers interpret the word *visṭi* as forced labour, Kangle in his translation of the *Arthaśāstra* has taken the word to mean simply workmen or labourers, without any suggestion that they were not paid wages. Thus the word *viṣṭibandhakah* according to Sharma connoted a class of officials who

procured free labourers for the state, according to Kangle it stood for a foreman of labourers.²⁷ Gautama, however, clearly states that the artisans had to render free labour to the king once every month. In Manu also we find a rule that the *kārus* and *śilpīs* were to work for the king one day a month. Sharma has drawn our attention to the commentary of Bhaṭṭasvāmin on a passage of the *Arthaśāstra* which suggests that there was a type of villages which supplied free labour in lieu of taxes.²⁸ The inscriptional references cited by Maity also indicate that forced labour was quite widespread in India during the post-Mauryan periods.²⁹ In the Junagarh inscription Rudradāman proudly declares that he did not burden the people with taxes and forced labour (*viṣṭi*) in constructing the Sudarśana lake. *Viṣṭi* here thus amounted to a burden on the people and can hardly be rendered as paid labourer.³⁰ At least in one passage in the *Arthaśāstra* the king is advised by Kauṭilya to protect agriculture from the afflictions of *danḍa*, *viṣṭi* and *kara*.³¹ It is clear that all these three were some kind of state levies and belong together to the same family. *Viṣṭi* cannot thus be translated as simply 'labour' in this passage in the *Arthaśāstra*. A strict regimentation of the entire economy by the state and the fact that the state also entered the field of production on a large scale as depicted in the *Arthaśāstra* would accord better with the practice of forced labour than an absence of it.³² If these arguments are valid and the word *viṣṭi* be rendered as forced labour, the *dāsas* and *karmakāras* had often to work free of wages in important state undertakings, such as building of roads, water works, wells, forts, etc., in times of peace and in

setting camps, carrying weapons, armour, wounded men etc., during war. Forced labour was an important item of state revenue, and a careful record of the availability of free labour had to be maintained by the revenue officials.³⁸

In a period of great commercial growth when trade was proving more lucrative than other economic pursuits, it was natural that trading should attract some members of the Śūdra *varṇa* also. Manu does not state anywhere clearly whether the Śūdras could adopt the occupation of traders. Yājñavalkya, however, permits a Śūdra to become a trader in case he failed to subsist by service of the twice-borns. Kauṭilya and Bṛhaspati accepted trade as a normal occupation of the Śūdra.³¹ Although Manu does not directly state that Śūdras could take to trade, he provides us with certain indirect indications that Śūdra traders were not unknown during his days. Ten modes of subsistence permitted to all men during times of distress included shopkeeping. After enumerating the list of articles which a Brāhmaṇa was forbidden to sell even during the time of distress, Manu states that by selling flesh, salt and lac a Brāhmaṇa becomes an outcaste, and by selling milk he becomes a Śūdra and by selling the rest of the forbidden articles he becomes a Vaiśya.^{34a} This statement suggests that the sellers of certain goods like meat, salt, etc., were outcastes and the sellers of milk were Śūdras. The selling of milk which implies the tending of cattle had become a normal occupation of the Śūdras.^{34b} In normal times lending money on interest by the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas was not allowed, but there was no such restriction for the

Śūdras. Elaborating the rules regarding the examination of witnesses Manu (VIII. 102) makes a very interesting statement: "Brāhmaṇas who tend cattle, who trade, who are mechanics, actors (or singers), menial servants and usurers, the (judge) shall treat like Śūdras". The verse suggests an association of the occupations mentioned with the Śūdra. On Kauṭilya's evidence we may state that Śūdras had started taking to trade in some measure. The practice seems to have increased with the passage of time and by the days of Bṛhaspati the Śūdra traders had become a source of state revenue.³⁵ Generally, however, the Śūdra traders were perhaps petty pedlars and shopkeepers rather than big businessmen.

As for cattle-rearing, although, theoretically it was still considered to be an occupation peculiar to the Vaiśyas, the concern displayed by Manu that the Vaiśyas were giving up the profession and that other *varṇas* were adopting it would indicate that the Śūdras were probably adopting it.³⁶ We have already seen that a verse in the *Manusmṛiti* (x. 92), associates the selling of milk with the Śūdras. From the low wages recommended for them, most of the herdsmen appear to have been Śūdras. Manu (IV. 253) includes herdsmen (*gopāla*) among the five categories of Śūdras whose food was acceptable to higher *varṇas*.

We find therefore that Śūdras were adopting practically all the occupations traditionally assigned to the Vaiśyas—the tending of cattle, agriculture and trade. The occupational distinction between the Vaiśya and the Śūdra was thus getting narrower. But as we discussed in the previous chapter, the statement should not be taken as applicable

to the entire Vaiśya *varṇa*. Whereas the upper Vaiśyas, the business magnates, enjoyed tremendous power and prestige and were members of the elite group, the majority of Śūdras still belonged to the category of landless labourers and daily wage earners. Only a small minority emerging as independent farmers and artisans were approaching the economic and, also perhaps to a certain extent, social rank similar to that of the ordinary Vaiśyas.

After this general survey of the occupations of Śūdras let us look at their station in social life. Śūdras constituted the lowest order of the society in the *varṇa* theory. "The Brāhmaṇa, the Kṣatriya, and the Vaiśya castes are the twice-born ones, but the fourth the Śūdra has one birth only; there is no fifth caste."³⁷ There was no offence the commitment of which would cause the loss of *varṇa* for the Śūdras. After enumerating the mixed castes originating through inter-caste marriages in despicable violation of the law, Manu declares that only the six categories of offspring begotten by Aryan fathers on women of equal and the next lower *varṇas* (*anantara*) had the duties of twice-born men; but all those born in consequence of a violation of the law 'were as regards their duties equal to Śūdras' (*Manu* X. 41). The expression 'equal to Śūdras' should be taken only in a loose sense. In actual practice many of these mixed castes belonged to an order lower than that of the Śūdra. It appears that there was a resistance from Śūdras to admit the so-called mixed castes to their own rank. If there was no distinction between the Śūdra and these mixed castes, such an expression as 'son of a Niṣāda by a Śūdra female' (*Manu*, X. 18) would lose all meaning. Cāṇḍālas, supposed

to be born of a liaison between Śūdra males, and Brāhmaṇa females were counted as standing outside the pale of the society. Apart from these, there are other references to tribes 'excluded from the community of those born from the mouth, the arms, the things and the feet' (*Manu*. X. 48). Clearly therefore, there were groups which were excluded from communion even with Śūdras. Thus it appears that the Śūdras and the mixed castes were equal only as far as the lack of sacramental and religious rights was concerned.³⁸ Socially Śūdras were definitely higher than a number of the despised castes. Śūdras therefore had the psychological satisfaction of finding that there were people belonging to even lower strata than themselves. Strictly speaking therefore, Śūdras could not be considered as forming the bottom most section of the social hierarchy.

The inter-caste marriages, though normally condemned, were a social reality and the lawgivers had to accept them. The great length at which *Manu* describes the evil consequences of mating Śūdra women—obviously an effort to deter the twice-born from committing such an act—suggests that these were not things of very infrequent occurrence. It appears that quite a few members of the upper class fell victims to the seductive charms of Śūdra women and took pleasure in dallying with them.³⁹ Thus the taking of Śūdra wives by twice-born men was grudgingly accepted. Although such marriages were severely censured, curiously enough a sort of incentive was given to the Śūdras to give their daughters in marriage to the members of upper classes. By giving daughters born of the union between the Śūdra woman and the twice-born man in marriage to males of

higher *varṇas*, say Brāhmaṇa, for seven consecutive generations, a Śūdra family could even attain Brāhmanahood.^{39a}

Partly through the rising economic strength and partly through such inter *varṇa* marriages many Śūdras were working their way up to higher social status.⁴⁰ If we scan the *Smṛti* evidences and probe a little further than the exterior of a formidable catalogue of disabilities imposed on the Śūdras, we find that quite a few concessions were made to them. The ideal conduct for the Śūdra was thought to be imitating the practice of virtuous men without reciting the sacred text. He was even allowed to practise certain portions of the sacred law of the Aryans. Yājñavalkya (I.121) is more specific and forthright in his prescription. A Śūdra could perform *Śrāddhas* and the five great sacrifices (*pañcamahāyajña*). Although the right of initiation and Vedic study was confined to the twice-born, some religious rights were being accorded to the Śūdras.⁴¹ It is interesting that these concessions were not granted to all and sundry, but only to the wealthy Śūdras who were 'genteel' in the eyes of the lawgivers. The Yājñavalkya verse referred to above besides granting religious concessions asks the Śūdras to look after their 'servants' well. These Śūdras therefore were capable of keeping servants.

These concessions were granted presumably to give the Śūdras some sense of belonging to the society which they were expected to serve. The concession went only to the extent that was necessary to prevent the alienation of the class from the bodysocial. At the same time care was taken not to give them a fully self-reliant position keeping them at the subservient level. Naturally this did not satisfy

the expectations of the Śūdras who demanded more. For a Śūdra the learning and even hearing of the *vedas* were forbidden. A Śūdra was not to be given spiritual advice and was not permitted to partake of the food offered to the gods. Even the Śūdra wife of a twice-born man was not to be allowed to participate in the performance of sacrifice. Despite these restrictions, we come across some instances of Brāhmaṇas giving intellectual and spiritual instructions to Śūdras. Verse III.156 in the *Manusmṛiti* indicates not only the existence of Śūdra pupils but also of Śūdra teachers who were capable of teaching even the Brāhmaṇas. There were also Brāhmaṇas who would agree to perform sacrifice for the Śūdras. It appears that the prosperous Śūdras were using their wealth to wean some Brāhmaṇas to minister to their spiritual and intellectual needs. "And if a Brāhmaṇa, though learned in the Veda, accepts through covertousness a gift from such (a man) he will quickly perish, like a vessel of unburnt clay in water."⁴² The Brāhmaṇa gaining subsistence from the Śūdras was not to be invited to the *Śrāddhas*; and begging property from the Śūdras for the completion of a sacrifice would make the Brāhmaṇa a caṇḍāla in the next life, since asking for wealth from the Śūdras and using it for sacrifice actually amounted to sacrificing for the Śūdras (*Manu*. XI. 24, 42).

The resistance to the Śūdra's increasing participation in the religious and intellectual life of the community was thus gradually giving away under pressure from both a section of the Brāhmaṇas as well as Śūdras.⁴³ We have seen that *Manu* (X. 126) had allowed the Śūdras a partial performance of the religious duties of the Āryan.

The names of the Śūdras are mentioned along with those of the other *varṇas*. It may be assumed that the Śūdras were accorded the right to offer water to their ancestors like the upper *varṇas*.^{43a} The *Matsyapurāṇa* (17.63-64) not only allows the Śūdras the ordinary *Śrāddha*, but also the *ṛddhi śrāddha* of offering libations, etc., to ancestors on such special occasions as, say, the birth of a son. The offerings and libations made to the *pitara* by Śūdras are mentioned in other *purāṇas* also (*Brahmāṇḍa*. III. 10. 96-99 ; *vāyu*. II. 11. 90, etc.). In one of the verses of the *Manusmṛiti* (x.2) it is stated that the Brāhmaṇas should learn the duties of all the *varṇas* and that he should advise them to practise these accordingly. Commenting on the verse Medhātithi says that it modifies an earlier verse (IV.80) according to which a Brāhmaṇa was not to give spiritual advice to the Śūdras. In other words Medhātithi believed that Manu allowed the Śūdra to get instruction from the Brāhmaṇa. The Śūdras were also gradually being admitted to the Hindu law of *saṁskāras*. The right to perform the name-giving ceremony was granted them by Manu (II.30-31), Bṛhaspati (*saṁskāra* 101, 154a) added to it the *karnavedha* and *cūḍākarana*. An instance of the Śūdra worshipping gods without reciting *mantras* is indicated by the *pratimānātaka* of Bhāsa (III. 5).

The *Śāntiparvan* even opens the door of Vedic knowledge to the Śūdras by declaring that all the four *varṇas* had the right to listen to the *Vedas* and that a person should learn even from a Śūdra. This extremely liberal prescription was perhaps not followed but it indicates that the door to intellectual life could not be kept permanently barred to

the Śūdras. The *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* mentions that the *Mahābhārata* was meant to take the place of the *Vedas* for the women and Śūdras. Whether this gave the Śūdras the right to study the Epics is difficult to decide. According to the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* the Śūdras might only listen to the *Purāṇas* but were not to read them.⁴⁴ Anyway, it is clear that the practice of reading and narrating stories of religious and moral import (*pāṭha* and *kathā*) to people had started and it must have been an important educative medium for the non-literate Śūdra mass. Prof. R. S. Sharma has drawn our attention to the fact that the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, considered to be the fifth *Veda*, was open for study and enjoyment equally to the Śūdras as to the members of the higher *varṇas*. We may note here that the actors and dancers (*kuśīlava*, *naṭa*, etc.) who were treated with disparagement,⁴⁵ were mostly Śūdras. The *Sāṅkhya* and the *Yoga* systems of philosophy were also open to the Śūdras. The *Sāṅkhya* accepted the *Vedas* as one of the sources of proof yet it was made open to all, just as were the Epics which contained *Vedic* quotations and could be listened to by the Śūdras.⁴⁶ Śūdras learned in the *Vedas*, grammar, *Mīmāṃsā*, *Sāṅkhya*, *Vaiśeṣika*, etc., are mentioned in the Buddhist work *Vajrasūcī*.⁴⁷ In the *Mahābhārata* we find an instance of the learned Śūdra in the famous story of the virtuous hunter. Jayaswal's suggestion that the learned Śūdras mentioned in the Buddhist works were sons of the Brāhmaṇas by Śūdra women merits consideration.⁴⁸ Vidura, one of the most respected and learned characters in the *Mahābhārata*, was the son of Vyāsa by a Śūdrā maiden. We have already suggested above that the marriages of Śūdra

women to the members of the upper *varṇas* helped to raise the rank of the Śūdras socially and culturally. Cultivated and educated Śūdras were no longer a rarity.

Besides these new rights to share in the Brāhmanical religious learning secured from the Brahmanical society, the Śūdras seem to have had their own tradition of learning and education. R. S. Sharma's contention that a passage of Yājñavalkya refers to the existence of teachers of servants may not be accepted,⁴⁹ but in another passage Yājñavalkya seems to refer to the student apprentices learning crafts residing at the house of the master. It is further stated that even after learning the craft the student should live with the master and pay the earnings from the craft he had learnt to the master against receiving food from him.⁵⁰ The picture that the verse suggests recalls to one's mind the European medieval system of guilds with master craftsman, journeymen and apprentices. Since crafts are normally associated with the occupations of the Śūdras, the students and teachers referred to in the verse must have belonged to that *varṇa*; the *Mitāksarā's* ingenious gloss that the crafts (*śilpa*) in question were such as *āyurveda* and its further suggestion that the students and teachers were Brāhmaṇas do not appear very convincing. Moreover, the provision that Brāhmaṇa teachers were not to make a trade of their learning would conflict with the line of interpretation in the *Mitākṣarā*. It may also be noted here that the practice of keeping student apprentices by master craftsmen is attested to by some contemporary Brāhmī inscriptions. Inscriptions nos. 150 and 1071 in *Lüders List* refer to

pupils (*antevāsi*) of sculptors. Similarly, there is a possible reference to an *antevāsi* of an architect in the inscription no. 154 and to an *acārya* who was a sculptor in the inscription no. 1186. We are not sure whether the instruction in these crafts involved only practical training or also some theoretical and literary teaching. The elaborate rules for the students of art, architecture, etc., detailed in a number of works on art of a later period would, however, indicate that the students were required to have also a literary background.⁵¹ Thus it would be wrong to brand the entire mass of the Śūdra population as devoid of any education.

That the growing prosperity of a section of the Śūdras had something to do with the sacramental and religious concessions made to them is indicated by our sources. The great merit of making gifts, especially to worthy Brāhmaṇas, came to be greatly emphasised during this period. This was natural in a period of great growth of trade and industry as the result of which a section of the population was becoming rich. What is more interesting for us is the fact that for the Śūdras the making of gifts has been especially praised. For the Śūdra charity was the most meritorious act through which he could achieve all his ends and could even attain Brāhmaṇahood in the next life. And the greatest beneficiaries from this doctrine were the Brāhmaṇas because the merit of the gift increased as the *varṇa* of the donee was higher.⁵² The Brāhmaṇas seem to have been caught in a dilemma—the old prejudice against performing religious acts on behalf of the Śūdras continued on the one hand, and on the other the gradual realisation that it would be of material advantage to the priestly class

to allow the Śūdras to perform religious acts.⁵³ The contradiction seems to have been resolved by up-grading the wealthy Śūdras. Thus Yājñavalkya (III.22) prescribed one month's impurity in case of death for the ordinary Śūdras in accordance with the old tradition. But he cut down the period to a half for the virtuous (*nyāyavartin*) Śūdras. The *nyāyavartin* Śūdras, explained the *Mitākṣarā*, were those who performed the *pākayajñas* and served the twice-borns. It is obvious that advantage could be taken of the newly granted ritualistic and religious rights only by those who had the means to pay for their piety. Making due allowance for the exaggerations, confusions of the Kali age described in the *Purāṇas* may be accepted as symptomatic of the social landscape of the period. "The king dishonours the Brāhmaṇas in the Kali on account of the changing times, and the Śūdras occupy high seats among the Brāhmaṇas . The Brāhmaṇas who depend upon the Śūdras for their livelihood, surround them when they are seated in vehicles in order to praise them and teach them the *Vedas*."⁵⁴

There was, however, a great deal of discrimination against the ordinary Śūdras. Monthly rates of interest prescribed in the *Smṛtis* were two, three, four and five percents according to the descending order of the *varṇa* of the borrower.⁵⁵ R. S. Sharma suggests that the rule was probably not put into practice, since a Nasik inscription proves that the monthly rate of interest on a deposit paid by a weavers guild (weavers were Śūdras) did not amount to more than one per cent.⁵⁶ However, it may be noted that the *Smṛti* rules probably applied to individual borrowers

and not to guilds, their financial status might have induced a lower rate of interest. In the payment of debt, first the debt of the Brāhmaṇa was to be cleared then that of the Kṣatriya, and so on. We have already noted that a Śūdra trader had to pay 1/6th of his profit as state revenue against 1/9th, 1/10th and 1/20th of the profit of the Vaiśya, Kṣatriya and Brāhmaṇa traders respectively.^{55b} Fines to be paid for offences were related to the *varṇa* position of the victim and offender, the Śūdras being the worst sufferers both ways. In the case of treasure trove the Brāhmaṇa could retain the whole of it, the Kṣatriya a half, the Vaiśya one fourth, and the Śūdra one sixth of the treasure found. It was only in the case of theft that the guilt of the Brāhmaṇa offender was considered to be the highest and that of the Śūdra the lowest. It is generally thought that the Śūdras enjoyed one economic relief, that is, they were exempted from taxation : they had to render free labour instead to the king. But this does not appear to have been the general practice. We have seen that according to Bṛhaspati Śūdra traders in fact had to pay the highest rate of tax. Similarly, the peasant proprietors and artisans were subjected to taxation.⁵⁶ Moreover, the poor villagers had to put up with a host of petty but extremely irritating demands of the state and state officials.⁵⁷ These demands included : providing free transport, free ferrying for state officers on tour and carrying their loads free of charge ; arranging for the food and shelter for such officers, and even providing fodder and pasturage for these touring officers' horses and other animals. For these purpose tributes were exacted in grass, fuel, vegetables, flower, milk, curd, etc.

Besides, there were such customs as giving the first calf born of every cow to the government. Some charges were levied during such important ceremonies as marriages.⁵⁸ It appears, thus, that the Śūdra *varṇa* as a whole was not exempted from taxation. Only those who did not have the capacity for cash payments were exempted, and that too not fully, they had to render diverse services instead.

Not only the economic aspect of the society, but the whole concept of law was class-oriented. Normally a Śūdra could be cited as witness only in a case involving a person of his own *varṇa*.⁵⁹ Some exceptions to this rule seem to have been allowed. For example, in criminal suits like assault, adultery, theft, defamation, etc., anybody irrespective of *varṇa* considerations could be cited as witness.^{60a} It is interesting that some later writers eased the rule in respect of certain categories of civil suits also. In boundary disputes Yājñavalkya (II. 150) allows herdsmen, peasants and foresters to be cited as witness. The scope of this concession was further extended by Bṛhaspati (XIX. 26-27) to artisans, hired labourers, hunters, etc. Manu (VIII. 258-60) would allow hunters, herdsmen, fishermen, etc., to act as witnesses⁶⁰ in boundary disputes between villages only as extreme steps when no proper witnesses were available from the two or four neighbouring villages. This growing liberalisation of legal provisions perhaps was the effect of the economic development of the Śūdras which entailed more litigation concerning their properties necessitating Śūdra witness even in civil cases. According to the *Arthaśāstra* servants could bear testimony for their master.⁶⁰ The *Arthaśāstra* (3. 1. 12) however, provides

that the *dāsa* and the *āhitaka* (pledged labourer) could not make a transaction on behalf of the master. But the rule does not appear to have been directed against the slaves and servants particularly, nor does it display any caste bias. It only indicates that Kauṭilya was not in favour of granting competence to enter a financial agreement unless one had the economic independence to fulfil it. Many other categories of persons were also denied the same right, for example, a minor son dependent on the father, a woman dependent on the husband or on the son, and so on.

While examining witnesses the Śūdras were admonished most severely to speak the truth and not to give false evidence. Normally perjury seems to have been considered as a spiritual guilt, the result of which was to be suffered after death. To the Śūdras guilty of perjury, however, as it appears from the *Arthaśāstra* (3. 11. 37-38), legal punishments like fines were also meted out. No such punishments were thought necessary for the members of the three higher *varṇas*. A clause in the *Manusmṛiti* (VIII.123) displays a more equitable attitude and provides for the imposition of fines and banishment on anybody giving false evidence except Brāhmaṇas.

The whole theory of punishment was graded according to *varṇa* distinctions: the Śūdras being the lowest were the recipients of the severest punishments. Among the different lawgivers of the period Manu was the most severe on the Śūdras. The law of libel and defamation was weighed against the Śūdra; the fine being highest when he was the offender and lowest when the victim. Similar was

the regulations regarding assault and verbal injury. Extremely severe penalties including physical torture and mutilations were prescribed for the Śūdras for these offenses. In contrast with these Manu (XI. 128-31) prescribes the penalty of only a wergeld of ten cows and a bull for killing a Śūdra. We are not sure whether all these provisions were actually put into practice.^{60a} Fa-Hien in his travel accounts showered praise on the Indian penal code for its great humanism and the absence of decapitation and corporal punishments. Even if these *Smṛti* provisions were not actually put into practice there can be little doubt that in the ancient Indian penal code the Śūdras had to suffer many inequities.

Since the *pratiloma* marriage was prohibited, a Śūdra could take a wife only from his own *varṇa*, whereas the members of the three higher *varṇas* could marry girls from the *varṇas* below them. Though there was no legal prohibition in giving Śūdra girls in marriage to males of upper *varṇas*, including the Brāhmaṇa, such marriages were usually looked down upon. The Śūdra wife of an upper class man was never given an honourable status in the family ; her life could have been hardly better than a female slave burdened with the additional conjugal responsibility. In such hypergamous unions the marriage was seldom a primary one for the male and did not have much significance, ritual or economic, for him ; a Śūdra wife was taken 'merely for pleasure'. For the girl, however, the marriage was primary and it was a thing of great prestige for the girl's family.⁶¹ The son of a twice-born man by the Śūdra wife was entitled to very little or no property of his father's estate.⁶² The

denial of share in the paternal property to the son of a high-born man by a Śūdra wife was revetted by the theory that the right of inheritance was grounded on the duty of offering funeral oblation.^{62a} The son of the Śūdra mother could not offer the funeral oblation to a twice-born father. The motive was as much economic as religious.

. In an atmosphere surcharged with horror for admixture of castes it is natural to expect that the law of adultery should be severe. It was especially so for a Śūdra having an adulterous relationship with a Brāhmaṇa woman—he was to be burnt alive. What was to be the punishment to a Śūdra for committing adultery with a Kṣatriya or a Vaiśya woman has not been specified in the *Arthaśāstra* or the *Manusmṛiti*. But Yājñavalkya (II, 286) ordains that in all cases of adulterous relationships when the male belonged to a lower and the female to a higher *varṇa* death was to be the punishment for the male and decapitation for the female. It is doubtful if this rule applied to all *varṇas* equally. According to Manu (VIII, 375-76) a Kṣatriya or a Vaiśya outraging a Brāhmaṇa woman or a Vaiśya outraging a Kṣatriya woman was only fined—often very heavily, a Vaiśya could even lose all his property—but not executed. It appears therefore that capital punishment was imposed only when the offender belonged to the Śūdra *varṇa* or *antyaja* castes (*Artha*. 4, 13, 35). Intercourse with a Caṇḍāla woman by a twice-born man was punished with banishment. Manu, however, displays a great sense of equity and justice in his treatment of the law of adultery.⁶³ The violation of a Śūdra woman by the members of three higher *varṇas* was as great an offence as their violation of a woman

of their own. The general principle followed seemed to have been : for violating a guarded woman the fine was 1000 *paṇas* and for violating an unguarded woman the fine was 500 *paṇas* irrespective of the *varṇa* of the offender or of the offended. A slight exception was, however, made if the woman violated belonged to the Brāhmana *varṇa*.

The same extent of protection of their chastity was, however, not offered to the female slaves, most of whom seem to have belonged to the Śūdra *varṇa*. From the statements found in the law-books it appears that the female slaves were often compelled to lead a life of shame and that such a thing was considered to be quite normal. They were treated as mere chattels. Secretly conversing with the wives of others and unknown women was quite a serious offence, but exceptions were made in the case of the wives of singers, dancers, female slaves, etc. (Manu. VIII. 361-63). For violating a female slave one had to pay a fine of twelve *paṇas* according to the *Arthaśāstra* (4.12. 28) and fifty *paṇas* according to Yājñavalkya (II. 290). It is not that Yājñavalkya considered this a more serious offence than Kauṭilya ; Yājñavalkya's provision seems to cover only a special category of female slaves who were meant for the exclusive service of the master alone, and if such slaves were violated by anybody other than the master then the fine was fifty *paṇas*. The ordinary female slaves were considered to be hardly different than prostitutes and were thought to be objects of pleasure ; their violation involved a fine of only ten *paṇas*.⁶⁴ If a group of persons collectively violated such a female slave each had to pay a fine of twenty four *paṇas*. The fine for deflowering the

daughter of a slave who was not a slave herself was twenty four *paṇas* in addition to a payment of dowry and ornaments according to the *Arthaśāstra* (4. 12. 26-28). Even for deflowering a courtesan's daughter one had to pay more than double the fine for deflowering a slave's daughter. What is more, the responsibility of the unwanted motherhood that must have often resulted from the attention paid to these unfortunate women by their masters seems to have been left almost entirely to the mothers alone. "As with cows, mares, female camels, slave-girls, buffalo-cows, she-goats and ewes, it is not the begetter (or his owner) who obtains the offspring....."⁸⁸ When the son by a duly married Śūdra wife of a upper *varṇa* man received very unkind treatment from the lawgivers, the condition of the son by a Śūdra female slave can be well imagined. However, if a Śūdra master presented his female slave with a son such a son was given the status of legal descendant and he could claim the half of the property of his father (*Manu*.IX. 179). In case there was no issue from the legally married wife, the son born of the female slave could take the whole of the property of the Śūdra father according to Yājñavalkya (II. 133-34). The *Arthaśāstru* (3. 13. 23-24), includes a provision according to which a female slave could acquire emancipation by bearing a child to the master; the child would also be free. Even after bearing a child to the master if the female slave continued to look after the affairs of the family, her brothers and sisters also became free. In other words, such a slave practically acquired the status of a regular wife. We are not sure whether this rule was applicable to all or only to the slaves

of the Śūdra masters. Ghoshal has, however, drawn our attention to an incidental reference in the *Divyāvadāna* that a female slave bearing a child to her master was immediately set free along with her offspring.⁶⁶ The buying and selling of pregnant female slaves were punishable offences of the lowest degree according to the *Arthaśāstra* (3, 13, 20.). Kauṭilya thus showed at least some consideration to the female slaves made to bear children to their masters. In spite of these provisions, however, the chastity of female slaves, or for that matter a slave's daughter, was not given much value. While for violating an ordinary maiden the fine amounted to two hundred *paṇas* and also sometimes entailed amputation, the fine for violating a female slave was only twelve *paṇas*.⁶⁷

The institution of slavery had an important bearing on the Śūdra's social position. Slavery in India never assumed the scale and character it had in Egypt, Greece or Rome. Compared to its Western counterpart the slave-system in India was highly humane and liberal. Indian slaves were not reduced to the sub-human level as in the West. It was this basic difference in the character of Indian slavery which led Megasthenes to his erroneous conclusion that all Indians were free and not one of them a slave, that the Indians did not use even aliens as slaves much less their own country men.⁶⁸

Manu VIII.415 classified slaves (*dāsa*) into seven categories according to the way they were acquired : he who was made a captive under a standard, he who served for his daily food, he who was born in the house, he who was bought, he who was given, he who was inherited from ancestors and he who

was enslaved by way of punishment. Five of these types—born in the house, received in inheritance, obtained as a present, bought, one who accepted slavery in lieu of food and shelter (*udaradāsa*, same as *bhaktadāsa* of Manu)—are also mentioned in the *Arthaśāstra* (3. 13. 1, 20). The above reference in the *Arthaśāstra*, however, does not purport to be a full list of the kinds of slaves as the verse of Manu does. It is likely that there were two more types of slaves prevalent which the *Arthaśāstra* had no occasion to mention. So there is no reason not to accept Manu's classification as authentic for the period.⁶⁹

Among ancient Indian writers Kauṭilya (3. 13) deals with the status of slaves in greatest detail. Two different terms, *dāsa* and *āhitaka*, are found in the *Artha-śāstra*. A careful consideration, however, shows that there were important differences between the two—while the *dāsas* belonged mostly to the Śūdra *varṇa* and were the slaves proper, the *āhitakas* were comprised of the upper *varṇa* people who were pledged temporarily to a master as the result of some misfortune.^{70a} *Āhitaka*, therefore, should better be rendered as a person pledged rather than a slave and the *āhitakas* were treated in a markedly lenient way and were entitled to a number of privileges denied to the *dāsas*. This difference should not be lost sight of while dealing with the question of slavery in its relation to the Śūdra's social position.

The question whether slavery could be imposed only on the Śūdras or also on the members of other *varṇas* is difficult to answer. The enslaving of twice-born men was disapproved by both Kauṭilya and Manu. Manu (VIII.411-14) prescribed

a fine of six hundred *paṇas* for reducing an initiated twice-born (*saiṃskṛtān dvijān*, which may also mean cultured or educated twice-born men) man to slavery even by a powerful and wealthy Brāhmaṇa. A Kṣatriya or a Vaiśya under reduced circumstances could of course be employed by a Brāhmaṇa, but he could not be compelled to do the work of a slave. Slavery was thought to be proper only for the Śūdras. In fact, the Śūdras were described as natural slaves, whether bought or unbought, who could never get emancipation, for they were created by God to be the slaves of the Brāhmaṇas. So there is no vagueness about Manu's attitude. In the *Arthaśāstra* (3. 13. 1-4) we come across an interesting statement that the selling of a minor *ārya*, even if the sale was made by a kinsman, was an offence which was to be punished by a fine of twelve *panas* in case of a Śūdra, twenty four in case of a Vaiśya, thirty six in case of a Kṣatriya, and forty eight in case of a Brāhmaṇa. The rigour of punishment increased, rising to death in case of a Brāhmaṇa, if the sale was made by a stranger. The same punishments were also to be given to the buyers and witnesses. Only for the Mlecchas it was no offence to sell their children into slavery; under no circumstances could an *ārya* be reduced to slavery. If this statement of Kauṭilya is taken at its face value it would appear that even a Śūdra was not allowed to be made a slave. This seems unlikely. Such a line of interpretation directly militates against the clear evidence of Manu.⁷⁰ However, it may be pointed out that Kauṭilya seems to contrast the *āryas* with *avaras* (*Artha*. 2. 15. 43-44), and the *avaras* seem to be identifiable with the Śūdras. Thus, it

appears that the term *ārya* normally did not include the Śūdras. R. S. Sharma's suggestion appears to be quite reasonable that the Śūdras included among the *āryaprāṇa* in connection with the prohibition of slavery in the *Arthaśāstra* were actually sons of twice-born fathers by Śūdra mothers.⁷¹ There seems to be general agreement among Kauṭilya and Manu that the higher *varṇa* men were not to be reduced to slavery, though the fine for the violation of the rule in the *Manusmṛti* is higher than that in the *Arthaśāstra*. No such rule that twice-borns were not to be made slaves is to be found in the *Yājñavalkya-smṛti*. It (II. 183) only states that a person of a higher *varṇa* could not be employed as a slave by a man of a lower *varṇa*. Explaining the provision the *Mitākṣarā* writes that a Kṣatriya could be employed by a Brāhmaṇa as a slave, and a Vaiśya by a Kṣatriya, and so on.

To resolve these contradictory statements is a difficult task. It would be clearly wrong to assume that there were no slaves from the three upper *varṇas*. The nature of the classification of slaves into different categories probably indicates that even people of higher *varṇas* were sometimes forced to adopt slavery. For instance, it was quite likely that a captive in a war belonged to the Kṣatriya *varṇa* or one who sold himself to slavery to liquidate debt belonged to one of the higher *varṇas*. Kauṭilya (3. 13. 19) recognise the possibility of the capture of *āryas* during wars. It is to be further noted that the restriction about the sale of the *āryaprāṇa* in the *Arthaśāstra* (3. 13. 1-4) is confined to the minors alone. He even allows an exception to the rule : an *ārya* minor could be sold as a slave when

the family was in distress for livelihood (*Artha*. 3. 13. 5). It is possible that such persons of higher *varnas* who were made slaves were treated more leniently and could get back their free status after serving for a specified short period or by paying a suitable ransom. Probably the term *āhitaka* of the *Arthaśāstra* denotes those twice-born persons of reduced circumstances who were forced to pledge or sell, themselves or their dependents. This terminological distinction was not maintained by later writers and the word *dāsa* came to stand both for slaves proper and pledged persons.

Āhitakas or pledged persons were given the protection of a number of liberal rules. Their children remained free, they retained their personal inheritance and also could earn for themselves, if the earning did not interfere with their duties towards their master. To make a pledged person perform unclean work like picking up corpses or excretions or leavings of food ; or to make a pledged woman attend the master bathing naked ; or if the master abused, hurt or dishonoured a female pledge ; any of these would automatically secure the freedom of the pledge and the master would forfeit the right to monetary compensation or price. For violating a pledged female nurse or defiling a pledged female maiden, the master had to pay a fine and compensation to the wronged girl and he forfeited the price money. On payment of monetary compensation or a suitable ransom an *āhitaka* could buy his freedom.⁷³

The *dāsas*, not favoured with the same degree of moderation, were also treated quite well.^{72a} A slave below eight years could not be compelled to do vile work or be sent to

a foreign land without kinsmen. A pregnant female slave could not be sold or pledged without making arrangement for her confinement. We have already seen that bearing the master's child secured the freedom of female slaves. A slave was given the right to possess private property by Kauṭilya which was to be inherited by his kinsmen after his death. In absence of kinsmen the master would inherit it. A slave could also buy his emancipation. Generally speaking, the slaves were hardly distinguishable from domestic servants and were treated as members of the master's family. Repeated advice is given to treat them well and kindly. Manu (IV. 180-85) asks the householder not to quarrel with the members of his own family and slaves and to bear with equanimity even harsh words from them. In this respect the slaves are put in the same category as the master's wife and children. In some respects the *dāsas* were treated more honourably than ordinary Śūdras—they were included among the five categories of Śūdras whose food was acceptable to the Brāhmaṇas.^{72b}

The legal literature of the period disallowed the Śūdras practically from all political rights. However, there are reasons to suspect that this expresses more the attitude of the writers than the actual condition. Both Kauṭilya (8. 2. 21) and Manu (IV. 61) strongly disapprove of the idea of a Śūdra ruler. A king of noble birth would command automatic respect and obedience and is preferable, even if he be weak, over a base born king says Kauṭilya. A country where a Śūdra rules is unfit for habitation by a *snātaka*, Manu ordains. Brāhmaṇas are asked not to accept gift from kings of non-Kṣatriya descent.

Bias against low-born kings was not typical of Brahmanical literature alone. An echo of the same is also found in the *Milindapañha*.⁷³ These statements indicate that Śūdra rulers were not entirely unknown. It is not unlikely that the term Śūdra ruler here also included the kings of foreign descent of the post-Mauryan period. These rulers were mostly followers of heretical sects.⁷⁴ According to Pargiter some *mleccha* and Śūdra kings ruled over certain states in the regions of Sindhu, Saurashtra, Kashmir, etc.^{74a}

It was not only the kingship, the Śūdras could hardly aspire to any higher administrative post either. For example, for the appointment of an *amātya* the nobility of birth was regarded as one of the important qualifications by both Kauṭilya and Manu. Manu warns that the kingdom where the Śūdra settles law sinks down the morass; a Brāhmaṇa even though not learned was better qualified to be appointed a judge than a Śūdra. From Kauṭilya, (1. 11, 12) however, we know that certain groups of Śūdras were associated with the state espionage system. From the *Arthaśāstra* it also appears that the bulk of the army was recruited from the Vaiśya and Śūdra population, especially from the Śūdras, though the core of the army consisted of well trained hereditary Kṣatriya troops.^{74b} Some successful Śūdra families of a slightly later period than ours are known to have undertaken the duties of the Kṣatriya and achieved Kṣatriya status. The cases of Raṇadurjaya of the sixth century and the founder of the well-known Kākatīyas have been cited by Derrett.⁷⁵ The Śūdras, thus barring some exceptions, did not have much place in the political life of the country. Like the social and the economic, in

this field also, as it appears from Manu's negative statements, only a few influential members of the Śūdra community probably held some administrative positions.

We may conclude that the economic growth of the period made a section of the Śūdras quite prosperous. The startling political changes of the post-Mauryan period also brought in hordes of foreign invaders into whose hands the political supremacy passed and who in the eyes of the orthodox were equal to the Śūdras. This too helped to strengthen the social position of the fourth *varṇa*. As the foreign tribes, the Indo-Greeks, Śakas and Kuśāṇas were gradually integrated into the Hindu society, the attitude towards the Śūdras started softening. However, it would be wrong to assume that the whole *varṇa* derived equally the benefits of the consequent social changes. In reality, it was the upper crust of the Śūdra population, the independent farmers and the prosperous artisans, with its economic power that registered a real improvement up the social ladder. For the bulk of the *varṇa*, the landless labourer and the wage earner, the pattern of life remained the same, a servile existence on a pittance from the employer.

CHAPTER VI

Mixed Castes and other Diverse Elements

From the very early period the realities of the society never corresponded to the theory of four fold *varna*, divisions. Quite a number of professional groups such as *kaimāra*, *carmamna*, *taksan*, etc., are mentioned in the Vedic literature. It is not possible to determine whether these professional groups had already acquired caste-character during the Vedic age; positive evidence to this effect is found from a later period. Certain social groups, the so-called out-castes, like the Caṇḍālas and the Paulkāsas with whom upper sections of the society did not have any communion are also found mentioned in the later Vedic literature. Moreover, there are indications that the Rathakāra and Niṣāda were gradually falling apart from the loosely formed Viś and acquiring the character of independent castes. The Rathakāra, e.g., was not a member of any of the three higher *varnas*, but unlike the Śūdras he had the privilege of consecrating sacred fire. Some sort of sacramental privilege was granted to the Nisādas also.¹ Besides, a few tribes like the Āndhras, Puṇḍras, Śābaras, Pulindas, Mūṭibas, etc., belonging to the lowest strata of the society, are also mentioned. However, these tribes according to a legend in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (33.6) descended from the recalcitrant sons of Viśvāmitra, an implication which was further elaborated in the *Manusmṛiti* that originally they

belonged to the higher social order and that their degradation was the result of their refusal to conform to the expected standard of conduct.

Attempts were made to extend and modify the *varṇa* theory to make room for the inclusion of these heterogeneous elements in it.^{1a} The concept of mixed castes was thus developed. Sometimes an attempt was also made to accommodate the different ethnic groups, both indigenous aborigines and foreign invaders, into the body social. Some of these warrior classes were absorbed into the society by labelling them as *vrātyas* i.e., those who got degenerated and lost the purity of descent due to the non-observance of prescribed rules of conduct. Moreover, the caste status was not always completely fixed or static. The scale of social mobility, *ab intra* and *ab extra*, the movement from one group to another within the society itself or the absorption of outside elements, could not have been negligible. The internal mobility was rationalised by the theory of *jātyutkarṣa* and *jātyapakarṣa*. Similarly relics of the admittance of outside elements are found in the concept of *vrātyas*. Already by the time of Pāṇini a vigorous movement to Aryanise some of these external ethnic groups had developed. Such terms as *brāhmaṇakṛtaḥ* and *kṣatriyakṛtaḥ* clearly show that all Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas were not natural, some were naturalised.² The *Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra* (XXII. 4. 3-30) prescribes the performance of *vrātyaṣṭoma* rituals by which the *vrātya* could be admitted into the Aryan society.³ Although a few of the absorbed ethnic groups and tribes succeeded in attaining such high ranks as those of Kṣatriyas or even

Brāhmaṇas, the vast majority were put into the category of the so-called mixed castes.

The theory that was most frequently invoked to explain the heterogeneous character of the society was that of the intermixture of castes as the result of irregular unions between the members of different *varnas* and castes. Probably presaged in some vague statements in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka upaniṣad* and Pāṇini,⁴ the theory finds its most elaborate exposition in the *Manusmṛiti*. Even if we assume that such union between members of different castes was not too infrequent an occurrence—Yudhisṭhira, e.g., in the *Vanaparvan* (180-31.33) states that it is difficult to ascertain the caste of human beings on account of the confusion of all *varṇas*; all sorts of men are always begetting offspring on all sorts of women—the theory can hardly be given more credit than a palpably artificial attempt to rationalise the existence of multiple social groups within the framework of the *varṇa* theory and it has been deservedly rejected by scholars as of little practical validity.⁵

According to the census figures of 1961 the combined strength of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes total up to about 95 millions accounting for a little more than one-fifth of the total population of India. In the pre-Mohammadan India the proportion of the depressed classes to the higher *varṇas* could not have been lower—many of them sought escape by embracing Islam, Sikhism, Christianity, etc. To accept the validity of the theory of mixture of castes we would be led to assume the prevalence of inter-caste marriages on a very vast scale, which in a society constantly fed on the idea of *varṇa* distinctions

was extremely unlikely. It was a part of the royal duty to enforce *varṇa* regulations and maintain social order by preventing miscegenation and confusion of castes. It is thus impossible to conceive of any large scale 'improper' marriages. Formation of a new caste or sub-caste could be the result of diverse causes—deviation from the rule of conduct proper for the caste, non-observance of the rules of food and drink, lapse on the part of female members, migration to a new place, etc., all leading to the isolation of the offending family or groups of families from the parent community giving birth to a new caste or sub-caste.^{5a}

Howsoever unreliable the *varṇasamkara* theory may be as an explanation of the genesis of various social groups, it at least proves the disfavour with which admixture of castes was looked on, and on that score deserves some attention.⁶ Of the two types of inter-caste marriages the attitude towards the *anuloma* was more liberal than towards the *pratiloma*. Though *savarṇa* marriage was the most approved form of marriage, barring Āpastamba (II. 6. 13. 1-4) other writers permit *anuloma* marriages. Manu (X. 10, 41) even allows the six *anuloma* castes to perform the rites peculiar to the *dvijas* while he brands the *pratiloma* castes as Śūdras. About the status of the offspring of *anuloma* marriages, the general view was that the children would get the *varṇa* of the father if born of a wife of the next lower *varṇa*.^{6a} Manu (X. 6), however, does not give them the same *varṇa* as that of the father because they are said to be tainted by the *varṇa* of the mother. Viṣṇu (16. 2) takes an entirely different position and states that

the *varna* of the mother decides that of the children in the case of *anuloma* marriages.⁶ Although it was the *pratiloma* marriages for which severest condemnations were reserved, the attitude towards *anuloma* marriages was one of acquiescence rather than of approval. The term admixture of caste (*varṇa saṁkara* or only *saṁkāra*) at least in some circles was applied impartially to the offspring of both *anuloma* and *pratiloma* unions.⁷

The difference among the writers was not confined only to the attitude towards different types of inter-caste unions. They also display substantial divergences of opinion regarding the names and derivations of individual castes. According to Manu (X.8), Yājñavalkya (I. 91), Kautilya (3. 7. 21), etc., the Ambaṣṭha is an *anuloma* caste born of a marriage of a Brāhmaṇa with a Vaiśya woman. Gautama (4. 14), as interpreted by Haradatta, makes the Ambaṣṭha an issue of a Kṣatriya male and Vaiśya female. An Ābhīra is described in the *Manusmṛiti* (X. 15) as a child of a Brāhmaṇa by an Ambaṣṭha girl, while the *Mahābhārata* (Sabhāparvan, 51. 12) explains that the Ābhīras descended to the level of the Śūdras on account of losing contact with the Brāhmaṇas and the *Mahābhāṣya* (on Pāṇini 1. 2. 72) expressly states that the Ābhīras were a caste distinct from the Śūdras. A Pulkasa (Paulkasa, Pukkusa) according to Manu (X. 18) is the offspring of a Niṣāda male from a Śūdra female, while according to Kautilya (3. 7. 31) he is the offspring of a Niṣāda male and Ugra female. Similarly, a Kukkuṭa according to Kautilya (3. 7. 31) is born of a Ugra male and Niṣāda female, whereas according to Manu (X. 18) he is the offspring of a Vaiśya by a Niṣāda wife.

According to Uśanas (17) a Pulkasa is the offspring of the Śūdra male by a Kṣatriya woman, according to Vaśiṣṭha (18.5) and Viṣṇu (16.5) on the other hand he is the offspring of a Vaiśya by a Kṣatriya female. A Karaṇa is a *vrātya* Kṣatriya in the *Manusmṛti* (X.22), whereas according to Gautama (4.17) and Yājñavalkya (I.92) a Karaṇa is an *anuloma* child born of a marriage between a Vaiśya male and a Śūdra female. The *Mahābhārata* (I. 115. 43), however, tells us that Dhṛtarāṣṭra had a Karaṇa son called Yuyutsu by a Vaiśya woman. The instances of such discrepancies are innumerable and hardly need recounting. These prove that apart from a common reliance on the theory of admixture of castes, different authors, since they were not sure of their facts, tried to explain the origin of the multiple castes as best as they could, depending mainly on the existing conditions they found around them. Moreover, another fact that clearly emerges from the descriptions of the so-called mixed castes is that mostly these were thinly disguised professional groups. It was occupation, more than parentage, that was considered to be the real index of the caste status of these people. Manu thus writes : "These races, (which originate) in a confusion (of the castes and) have been described according to their fathers and mothers, may be known by their occupations whether they conceal or openly show themselves." A man would reveal his origin by his acts even if he tried to conceal his parentage.⁸

The list of the so-called mixed castes went on lengthening till it was conceded that they were in fact innumerable.⁹ The best and the most logical theoretical statement

in this regard can be found in the works of the medieval commentators like Viśvarūpa and Medhātithi.¹⁰ They in the first instance speak of a total of sixty mixed castes and then accept the possibility of innumerable further mixing between themselves. These sixty were : six primary *anulomas* and six primary *pratīlomas*, twenty-four secondary *anulomas* springing from the union of the six *anulomas* with the four *varṇas* and twenty-four secondary *pratīlomas* arising from the union of the six *pratīlomas* with the four *varṇas*.

The six primary *anulomas* were Murdhāvasikta, Ambaṣṭha and Niṣāda or Pāraśava (begotten by the Brāhmana on Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra females respectively), Māhiṣya and Ugra (begotten by the Kṣatriya on Vaiśya and Śūdra wives respectively) and Karaṇa (the Vaiśya's son by the Śūdra wife) (*Yāj.* I, 91-92). Although Manu (X. 8-10) refers to the existence of six *anuloma* castes, he names only three of them, namely, Ambaṣṭha, Niṣāda and Ugra. In the *Sūtras* and the *Arthaśāstra* also we find that generally only three have been specified.^{10a} This is quite in keeping with the theory that the child begotten on the wife of the next lower *varṇa* belongs to the *varṇa* of the father. It appears that by the days of Yājñavalkya the theory had lost its validity and the attitude towards all forms of mixed marriages became more hardened. About the names of the primary *anuloma* castes, other than the fact that some mention only three of them, there was no significant difference among our authorities—practically the same names appear in various lists.

The six primary *pratīlomas*, minor variations are found,

were Caṇḍāla, Vaidehaka, Sūta, Kṣattri, Māgadha and Āyogava (the table next page).

Regarding the subsidiary mixed castes arising from the union of the four *varṇas* with the twelve original mixed castes (6 *anulomas* + 6 *pratilomas*) and the unions between the primary mixed castes themselves, we encounter some significant disagreements. Such castes are listed at varying length in the different texts of the period, the most extensive being the list in the *Manusmṛiti*. About the actual derivation of these castes through their parentage again we find substantial difference. Some of these subsidiary mixed castes are however, found common to quite a few of our lists. It appears that prejudice against these people was particularly widespread and was shared by a number of authors. The castes common to different Brāhmaṇical lists were Vaiṇas, Pulkasas, Kukkuṭakas, Śvapākas, other than the twelve primary mixed castes.¹¹ It is interesting to note that Buddhist texts repeatedly label five castes, the Caṇḍāla, Veṇa, Niṣāda, Pukkusa and Rathakāra, as low-born (*hīnajāti*).¹² Combining these twolines of evidences we may conclude that Caṇḍāla, Veṇa (or Vaiṇa), Pukkusa (or Paulkasa), Rathakāra, Kukkuṭakas and Śvapākas were probably the most despised castes and they represented the lowest ranks of the social ladder. We may now turn our attention to some aspects of their lives.

It appears that some occupational groups like weaver, basket-maker, flute-maker, those who subsisted on hunting wild animals, etc., were originally non-Aryans, but they retained their independent economic status and could not be reduced to the rank of the *dāsas* who formed the nucleus

| Parents | Names of offspring in various works with reference | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| | Vaśiṣṭha | Baudhāyana | Kautilya | Manu | Yājñavalkya | Nārada | Viṣṇu |
| Brāhmaṇa mother, Śūdra father | Caṇḍāla XVIII. 1 | Caṇḍāla I. 9, 7 | Caṇḍāla 3. 7. 26 | Caṇḍāla X. 12 | Chañḍāla I. 93 | Caṇḍāla XII. 113 | Caṇḍāla XVI. 6 |
| Brāhmaṇa mother, Vaiśya father | Rāmaka XVIII. 4 | Sūta I. 9. 8 | Vaidehaka 3. 7. 27 | Vaidehaka X. 11 | Vaidehaka I. 93 | Vaidehaka XII. 111 | Vaidehaka XVI. 6 |
| Brāhmaṇa mother, Kṣatriya father | Sūta XVIII. 6 | Sūta 3. 7. 28 | Sūta X. 11 | Sūta I. 93 | Sūta XII. 110 | Sūta XVI. 6 | |
| Kṣatriya mother, Śūdra father | Vaiṇa XVIII. 2 | Kṣātri I. 9. 7 | Kṣatta 3. 7. 26 | Kṣatri X. 12 | Kṣātri I. 94 | Kṣātri XII. 112 | Māgadha XVI. 5 |
| Kṣatriya mother, Vaiśya father | Pulkasa XVIII. 5 | Āyogava I. 9. 8 | Māgadha 3. 7. 27 | Māgadha X. 11 | Māgadha I. 94 | Māgadha* XII. 111 | pukkasa XVI. 5 |
| Vaiśya mother, Śūdra father | Antyava- sāyin XVIII. 3 | Māgadha I. 9. 7 | Āyogava 3. 7. 26 | Āyogava X. 12 | Āyogava I. 94 | Āyogava* XII. 111 | Āyogava XVI. 4 |

of the Śūdra *varṇa*. These erstwhile independent non-Aryan occupational groups were later absorbed into the society as mixed castes. A similar fate befell the groups of public entertainers, acrobats, rope-walkers, jugglers, snake-charmers, dancers, musicians, drummers, pipers, etc. The hereditary character of the professions and the scant respectability of their jobs led them to live a group life of isolation and gave them a close knit character of caste. In the *Smṛtis* the distinction between the non-Aryan tribes and the offspring of the irregular unions between the members of the Aryan *varṇas* has been drawn very thinly or not at all.¹³

Ever since the Vedic period Caṇḍāla has been a synonym for contempt. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (V.10.7) ranks him with dogs and pigs. According to the *Smṛtis* he is the *pratiloma* issue of a Śūdra by a Brāhmaṇa wife. This lapse on the part of the Brāhmaṇa woman, howsoever inexcusable in the eyes of the orthodox, does not probably fully explain the abhorrence in which a Caṇḍāla was held. 'The lowest of all men', 'unspeakable', 'raven of ill omen', etc., are the usual adjectives used for him. The contempt felt for the Caṇḍālas appears to have been due to their unclean and low occupation. Originally they might have been a non-Aryan tribal group, as has been suggested by Fick.^{13a} Manu (X. 51-56) says that the Caṇḍālas and Śvapākas were to have their dwellings outside the villages, they were to dress themselves with the discarded garments of the dead, their ornaments were to be made of iron. The *Arthaśāstra* (2. 4. 23) fixed the vicinity of the cremation ground as the appropriate quarter where the Caṇḍālas

were to live. These suggest that the occupation of Caṇḍāla included the disposal of the dead. It was their appointed duty to carry out of the house the bodies of those who died without relatives. The corpse-burners who are mentioned along with the Niṣāda, Veṇa, etc., in the *Milindapañha* were probably the Caṇḍālas.¹⁴ The *Rāmāyaṇa* (1.58.10f) describes the Caṇḍālas as of dark complexion with dishevelled locks, smeared with the ashes of the crematorium and adorned with iron ornaments. Apart from working at the crematorium the Caṇḍālas also acted as executioners. According to Viṣṇu (XVI. 11, 14), corroborated also by Manu (X.56), the calling of the Caṇḍāla was to act as hangman or public executioner of the criminals sentenced to death. The Caṇḍāla's duty as executioner is also referred to in the *Anuśāsanaparvan* (48. 11). In the *Arthaśāstra* (3. 3. 28) we find the Caṇḍāla engaged for whipping offenders. In order to supplement his meagre income the Caṇḍāla had recourse to hunting and animal trapping (*Śāntiparvan*, 138. 23, 114). He also kept such animals as dogs and donkeys (Manu, X. 51), presumably for hunting and as beasts of burden. He also probably made some money from an occasional show of acrobatics and dog fights.¹⁵

The disabilities that the Caṇḍāla was subjected to were so widespread and numerous that he was reduced to a sub-human existence. An outcast, he had to live outside the precincts of the city or village settlement and could not move about freely. He was not allowed to enter the habitational area of the upper class during night.¹⁶ The well that he drew water from became unfit for use by

members of other castes. Not only physical contact with him but even the wind wafting from him or a mere sight of him were defiling.^{16a} In a *Jātaka* (Mātanga) story we find two daughters of genteel folk feeling so outraged because they accidentally had caught a glimpse of a Caṇḍāla that they washed their eyes with perfumed water for purification. There was of course no question of their receiving any opportunity for education—a student of the *Vedas* was forbidden to study at a village where Caṇḍālas lived and had to stop reciting the *Vedas* even if noise made by Caṇḍālas at a distance was heard and was to fast for three days as atonement. Even when a Caṇḍāla tried to sneak into an institution to improve his lot with education he was easily discovered because of his language and turned out.¹⁷ Perchance the Caṇḍālas touched one of the higher order or came near the residences of the 'decent folk' they not only committed a legal offence and were fined for the same (*Ar̥tha*. 3. 19. 8-10), but also ran the danger of being mobbed and lynched. That the actual condition of the Caṇḍālas was not much different from the one suggested by the *Smṛti* rules is indicated by the numerous stories in the *Jātakas* (III. 233, IV. 376, 390, VI. 156, etc.) and the accounts of the Chinese pilgrims. Fa-Hien's description that the Caṇḍālas entering a market or public place had to announce their approach by striking a piece of wood to give passers by time to clear out of their defiling presence shows the reality and the extent of the untouchability prevalent in the society.

The Pulkasas or Paulkasas (variants Pukkusa, Pukkasa, etc., are also found) were another despised caste mentioned

from the time of the later Vedic period. Paulkasa has been branded as a mixed caste but there is considerable difference of opinion regarding his actual descent. According to Baudhāyana (I. 9. 13) and Manu (X. 18) a Niṣāda on a Śūdra female gives birth to Paulkasa, according to Kauṭilya (3. 7. 31) a Niṣāda on a Ugra female produces a Paulkasa. According to Vaśiṣṭha (XVIII. 5) and Viṣṇu (XVI. 5) Paulkasa is the offspring of a Vaiśya from a Kṣatriya woman and according to a still third school¹⁸ he was the child of a union between a Kṣatriya mother and a Śūdra father. Naturally therefore, there was some difference of opinion regarding his occupation. According to the *Vaikhānasa Smārta Sūtra* (X. 14) he lived by making and selling liquors, whereas the *Agnipurāṇa* (151. 51) states that the occupation of the Paulkasa was hunting. The same view is also found in the *Vaśiṣṭha* and *Viṣṇu Dharma Sūtras*. Manu's (X. 49) opinion is also practically the same, hunting and trapping animals that live in the holes was his occupation. In the Pāli literature Pukkusa has been described as caster of flower, *Puppha chaddaka*. The exact nature of the work this phrase connotes is difficult to determine. Fick surmises that they were engaged in cleaning temples and palaces.¹⁹ But in a society where untouchability of an extreme type seems to have been prevalent it seems doubtful that a caste invariably associated with the Caṇḍālas would be allowed to enter the precincts of temples. Rhys Davids opined that the Pukkusas were a non-Aryan tribe who earned their living by means of refuse clearing.²⁰ This seems more reasonable.

The social status of the Pulkasas was as bad as that of the Caṇḍālas with whom they are almost always found associated. The medieval commentator Ksīrasvāmī says that the Pukkusa was the same as *mṛtapā*.²¹ The *Mahābhāṣya* (I. 475 ; Pāṇini II. 4. 10) mentions the *mṛtapās* along with the Caṇḍālas as *niravasita* Śūdra, meaning that a vessel used by them for taking food remained unfit to be used by any other caste and could not be purified even by fire. As far as the occupation was concerned, the Epics seem to have made little distinction between the Caṇḍālas and the *mṛtapās* and associate them with cremation and disposal of dead.²²

Niṣāda, also called Pāraśava, according to the *Smṛti* and allied literature was an *anuloma* caste, an offspring of the Brāhmaṇa father and Śūdra mother.²³ It is, however, clear that originally the Niṣādas were a non-Aryan ethnic group. The appellation probably covered the friendly non-Aryans who were not included in the Aryan social organisation, but were treated as 'the first among the outsiders' immediately below the Śūdra *varṇa*. The *Nirukta* (III. 8) explaining the term *pañcajanāh* states that according to Aupamanyava the five people were the four *varṇas* with the Niṣādas as the fifth.²⁴ A Niṣāda was also given some sacramental rights—a Niṣāda chieftain could perform an *iṣṭi* and offer *caru* to the god Rudra.²⁵ One giving away everything in a *viśvajit* sacrifice was allowed to stay in a Niṣāda settlement and Partake of their food.^{25a}

Although the social position of the Niṣādas during the Vedic age was not so low as in later periods, he had already started attracting scorn and disdain because of his

non-Aryan origin. The statement in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (37.7) that the Niṣādas or thieves or evil doers rob a wealthy man in a forest, throwing him in a well, may be taken as an example. Explaining the etymology of the term Niṣāda the Nirukta writes : 'sin sits down in him'.²⁶ The description of the Niṣādas as dark and dwarfish with snub nose and red eyes and living in mountains and forests, denotes their non-Aryan origin. In fact, the inadequacy of the theory of *anuloma* origin of the Niṣāda became so obvious that the *Smṛti* commentators had to gloss over the difficulty by suggesting that these Niṣādas (i.e., offspring of the Brāhmaṇa male and the Śūdra female) were different from the Niṣādas who live by catching fish.²⁷ Fishing, plying boats and hunting seem to have been the occupations of the Niṣādas. In the Rāmāyaṇa Guha, the Niṣāda king, had at his command a fleet of boats and helped Rāma to cross the Ganges. These professions with a very poor economic return not only made the material status of the Niṣādas low but also brought a decline in their social and ritual status during the post vedic period—Niṣāda's food became a taboo, the vedic study was halted for a day in the village a Niṣāda entered, and finally the Niṣādas came to be equated with Caṇḍālas.^{27a}

The Veṇu (Vaiṇa, Veṇa), also called Veṇukāra or Velukāra (bamboo workers), are grouped together with the Caṇḍāla, Pukkusa, Rathakāra, etc., as low borns in Buddhist literature. In the list of crafts mentioned in the *Milindapañha* (p. 331) the Veṇa appears alongwith *chavadāhaka* (corpse burner i.e., Caṇḍālas), *Pupphachadaka*

(Pukkasa ?) and Niṣāda. Yājñavalkya (III. 207) also associates the Vena with Pūlkasas. In the *Smṛti* literature Veṇa or Vaina, as is to be expected, has been labelled as a mixed caste. Manu (X. 19) describes the Vaina as the offspring of a Vaidehaka male and an Ambaṣṭha female. Kauṭilya (3. 7. 32) while deriving the Vaina from the same parentage makes the Ambaṣṭha the father and the Vaidehaka the mother. Yājñavalkya is silent regarding the parentage of the Veṇa or Vaina. The *Mitākṣarā* (on Yaj. III. 207), however, agrees with Manu that the Vaina is the offspring of a Vaidehaka father and an Ambaṣṭha mother. Vaśiṣṭha (XVIII. 2) on the other hand describes the Vaina as a *pratiloma* caste springing from an inverse union of a Śūdra male and a Kṣatriya female. Baudhāyana makes contradictory statements regarding the origin of the Vaina ; at one place (1. 8. 10) he describes the Vaina as a *Pratiloma* child of a Ugra male and a Kṣatriya female and at another (1. 9. 12) as born of a Vaidehaka father and an Ambaṣṭha mother.

In view of similar differences of opinion among our authorities it is not possible to determine the precise occupation of the Veṇa. Buddhist literature normally describes the Veṇa as basket-maker or bamboo worker ; we find him going to the forest in search of bamboo and reed to ply his trade (*Jat.* IV. 251). In the medieval *Smṛti* commentaries also we find the same description of his profession.²⁸ According to one reading of the *Arthaśāstra* a Vaina was a Rathakāra by profession.²⁹ The *Arthaśāstra* (2. 4. 13) also speaks of bamboo workers (*veṇukāra*) who were to dwell in the western quarter of the city along with

such other craftsmen as workers in wool, yarn, leather, armour, etc., who all were probably Śūdras. Manu on the other hand describes the function of the Veṇa as beating drums, presumably to announce state proclamations and orders, a job which till very recently was entrusted to the members of the depressed classes. As a drum-beater or a basket-maker, the Veṇa's social position was very low, his food, for example was unacceptable (*Manu*, IV. 215).

The Rathakāras illustrate the gradual decline in the social status of a group of people who were once considered highly important. In the *Artharvaveda* the Rathakāra (chariot-maker) and Karmāra (smith) are mentioned along with *rājan*, *rājakṛt*, *sūta* and *grāmaṇi* as important groups of people whose obedience the king was particularly anxious for. Sūtas and also sometimes Rathakāras were counted among the 'jewels' (*ratnins*) of the state. Rathakāras were not merely an industrial population but had acquired a definite social status and were treated almost as a caste. Jaimini in his *Pūrvamīmāṃsā Sūtra* (VI. 1. 44-50) discussing the *Vedic* evidence about their social position states that although they were inferior to the three higher *varṇas*, they were not Śūdras (i.e., were superior to them) and had the right to consecrate sacred fire. In the *Gṛhya Sūtras* we find references to the *upanayana* of the Rathakāras. But already by the period of the *Sūtras* the Rathakāra's position seems to have started declining. Maybe with the disappearance of the Vedic society the importance and utility of the chariot-maker's trade declined. In the *Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra* (I. 9. 6) the Rathakāra is described as an *anuloma* caste, the

offspring of a Vaiśya father and a Śūdra mother. Yājñavalkya (I. 95) proceeded a step further and labelled both of his parents themselves as *anulomas*—the Māhiṣya (offspring of Kṣatriya male and Vaiśya female) father and the Karaṇa (offspring of Vaiśya male and Śūdra female) mother. In certain other texts we find the Rathakāra described as the issue of a clandestine inverse union (*pratiloma*) between a Kṣatriya male and a Brāhmaṇa female.³⁰ The original occupation of the Rathakāra, as the very name suggests, was chariot building which in other words may be described as carpentry of a specialised nature. In fact, in *Vedic* literature the Rathakāra is very often found associated with the *takṣaka* (carpenter). In Buddhist literature, however, we sometimes find leather working and cobbling included among the functions of the Rathakāra.^{30a} However, the memory of their once glorious past was not completely forgotten by the Rathakāras. Even during the historical period they sometimes claimed equality with the Brāhmaṇas.³¹ How far this represented their actual condition and not merely their aspiration remains doubtful.

Like the Rathakāras, another social group, the Sūtas also suffered a social decline during the post-*Vedic* period. The Sūtas and the Rathakāras seem to have had an association with each other because both were occupationally connected with the chariot, one with building and the other with manning it. Sūtas were included among the jewels of the state and described as king makers. In the *Vedic* polity, therefore, the Sūtas held a position of power and prestige. In later literature, however, the Sūtas

are described as a *pratiloma* caste, the issue of a Kṣatriya male and a Brāhmana female. The occupation of the Sūtas according to the *Smṛtis* was chariot driving and managing horses. As the charioteer of the king the Sūta was a companion of the king in battlefields and also presumably enjoyed access to the court and royal palace. He was therefore uniquely placed to study the royal way of life and came to be looked upon as the storehouse and preserver of the tradition of valour and gallantry of the heroes of yore. The function of the Sūtas has thus often been described as that of the bard and inspirer of the king by reminding him of his true duties. During our period, as it appears from the *Smṛtis*, his actual social position, however, did not measure up to more than that of the horse attendant.^{31a}

We find different versions regarding the origin of the Kukkutakas—divergent accounts are found even within the same text. Baudhāyana (1. 8. 12 & 1. 9. 14) makes him an offspring by turn of a Vaiśya and a Śūdra on a Niṣāda female. Manu (x. 18) also describes the Kukkuṭaka as a Śūdra's child by the Niṣāda wife. According to these derivations a Kukkutaka was an *anuloma*, born of a Vaiśya or a Śūdra father and an *anuloma* mother (Niṣāda): they run contrary to an earlier statement of Baudhāyana (1. 8. 8) that the Kukkuṭaka was the issue of an inverse union. Kauṭilya (3. 7. 31) traces the Kukkuṭaka's origin from *anuloma* castes on both father's and mother's sides—Kukkuṭaka is begotten by an Ugra on a Niṣāda female. About the Kukkutaka, only on one point do our authorities seem to agree, he is regarded as the opposite number of the Pulkasa. The union of the castes giving birth to

Kukkuṭaka would give birth to Pulkasa if the castes of the father and mother were exchanged i. e. the caste of the father of Kukkuṭaka would be the caste of the mother in case of Pulkasa and vice versa.⁸² It is clear, therefore, that the Kukkuṭakas had an intimate relation and a possible kinship with the Pulkasas. The occupation of the Kukkuṭakas has not been specified in the *Smṛti* texts of our period, but from the name Kukkuṭaka and their possible relationship with the Pulkasas we may surmise that their (Kukkuṭakas') occupation was not far removed from that of the latter, i. e. hunting and trapping of birds and animals.

Sharing a common pattern of living with the Caṇḍālas, the Śvapākas were subjected to the same social disdain. According to Manu (X. 51-56) the Śvapākas had to stay outside the precincts of the normal habitat of other folk along with the Caṇḍālas, they were asked to dwell preferably near the crematorium and help in the disposal of dead and act as executioners for criminals condemned to the death sentence. They also seem to have worked as scavengers which might have been their normal profession. In the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa* (8. 81-83, 86, 96), no distinction has been made between the Śvapāka and the Caṇḍāla. The *Smṛtis* normally describe a Śvapāka as born of a union between the Ugra and the Kṣatri—the Ugra father and the Kṣatri mother, or a Kṣatri father and a Ugra mother.⁸³ There are some hints suggesting that in some circle the theory was current that like the Caṇḍālas the Śvapākas too originated from the most reprehensible kind of liaison between a Brāhmaṇa female and a low caste male, an

Ambaṣṭha or even a Caṇḍāla. Another reason why the Śvapākas were held in contempt was probably their eating habits—they took dog's flesh³⁴.

After this brief survey of the life and condition of some of the more frequently mentioned mixed castes, we may now turn our attention to the ideas, principles and prejudices leading to their exclusion from the main streams of the society. The *Manusmṛiti*, because it gives us by far the most detailed information regarding these people, reflects best the nature and extent of the prejudices leading to certain social groups being designated as mixed castes. Other than the ones discussed above, the mixed castes mentioned in the *Manusmṛiti* were: Āvṛta, Ābhīra, Dhigvaṇa, Sairandhra, Mattreyaka, Mārgava or Kaivarta, Kārāvara, Andhra, Meḍa, Pāṇḍusopāka, Āhiṇḍika, Cuñcu, Madgu, etc. Besides these a list of the *vrātyas* is also given. The *vrātyas*, as defined by Manu (X. 20), were "Those (sons) whom the twice born beget on wives of equal caste, but who, not fulfilling their sacred duties, are excluded from the Sāvitrī". The *vrātyas* from the Brāhmaṇas were Bhūrjakaṇṭaka, Āvantya, Vāṭadhāna, Puspadhā, and Śaikha; from the Kṣatriyas were Jhalla, Malla, Licchavi, Naṭa, Karaṇa, Khasa and Draviḍa; from the Vaiśyas were Sudhanvan, Ācārya, Kāruṣa, Vijanman, Maitra and Sātvata.³⁵ A further group of Kṣatriya tribes who had descended to the level of the Śūdras for not following Brahmanical precepts are also mentioned. They were the Pauṇḍrakas, Koḍas, Draviḍas, Kambojas, Yavanas, Śakas, Pāradas, Pahlavas, Cīnas, Kirātas, Daradas, and Khasas.^{36a} And finally, we find the very significant statement that all

the tribes which were not included among the four *varṇas* were known by the common¹ appellation of *dasyus* whether they spoke a Mleccha or an Aryan tongue (*Manu*. X. 45).

The way Manu interspersed the discussion on the origin and social position of the mixed castes among the same on the *vrātyas* and the degraded Kṣatriya tribes, perhaps indicates that he was not conscious of any sharp demarcation between them, and that in his eyes they all belonged to the same social genus. The *Dasyu* is described at one place as a mixed caste (*Manu*. X. 32) and at another as a non-Aryan tribe (*Manu*. X. 45). The *Karāṇa* described as a mixed caste elsewhere (*Yāj.* I, 92) has been described as a *vrātya* Kṣatriya by Manu (X. 22). The *Draviḍas* and *Khasas* are described both as *Vrātya* Kṣatriyas and as people who degenerated into *Śūdras* (*Manu* X. 22, 44).

The occupational correlation of some of the mixed castes is given below on the basis of Manu :—

| Caste | Father | Mother | Occupation | Reference |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Sairandhra | Dasyu | Āyogava | Toileting & personal service | Manu., X. 32 |
| Maitreyaka | Vaidehaka | " | Music & singing praises of great men | Manu., X. 33 |
| Mārgava or Kaivarta or Dāsa | Niṣāda | " | Boating | Manu., X. 34 |
| Kārāvara | " | Vaidehaka | Leather working | Manu., X. 36 |

| Caste | Father | Mother | Occupation | Reference |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| Andhra | Vaidehaka | Kārāvāra | Slaughter of wild animals | Manu., |
| Meda | Vaidehaka | Niṣāda | Slaughter of wild animals | Manu., X. 36, 48 |
| Pāṇḍusopaka | Caṇḍāla | Vaidehaka | Working on cane and bamboo | Manu., X. 37 |
| Āhiṇḍika | Niṣāda | " | not specified | Manu., X. 37 |
| Sopāka | Caṇḍāla | Pukkasa | Execution of criminals | Manu., X. 38 |
| Antya-vasāyin | " | Niṣāda | Employed in burial ground | Manu., X. 39 |
| Sūtas | Kṣatriya | Brāhmaṇa | Management of horses and chariots | Manu., X. 11, 47 |
| Ambaṣṭhas | Brāhmaṇa | Vaiśya | Art of healing | Manu., X. 8, 47 |
| Vaidehaka | Vaiśya | Brāhmaṇa | Service of women | Manu., X. 11, 47 |
| Māgadha | " | Kṣatriya | trade | Manu., X. 11, 47 |
| Niṣāda | Brāhmaṇa | Śūdra | Killing of fish | Manu., X. 8, 48 |
| Āyogava | Śūdra | Vaiśya | Carpentry | Manu., X. 12, 48 |
| Cañcu | Not specified | Not specified | Hunting | Manu., X. 48. |
| Madgu | " | " | " | " |

| Caste | Father | Mother | Occupation | Reference |
|----------|-----------|----------|---|---------------------|
| Kṣatriya | Śūdra | Kṣatriya | Catching and killing animals living in holes, hunting | Manu., X. 12, 49 |
| Ugra | Kṣatriya | Śūdra | " | Manu., X. 9, 49 |
| Pukkasa | Niṣāda | " | " | Manu., X. 18, 49 |
| Dhigvaṇa | Brāhmaṇa | Āyogava | Working in leather | Manu., X. 15, 49 |
| Veṇa | Vaidehaka | Ambaṣṭha | Playing drums | Manu., X. 19, 49 |
| Caṇḍāla | Śūdra | Brāhmaṇa | Disposal of dead and execution of criminals | Manu., X. 12, 51-56 |
| Śvapāka | Kṣatriya | Ugra | " | Manu., X. 19 |

Occupation of some of these people are also given in the *Viṣṇusmṛiti* as summarised below :—

| Caste | Occupation | Reference |
|-----------|---|-----------------|
| Āyogava | Offering public entertainment like wrestling, dancing etc. | Viṣṇu., XVI. 8 |
| Pukkasa | Hunting | Viṣṇu., XVI. 9 |
| Māgadha | Canvassing qualities of goods to be sold | Viṣṇu., XVI. 10 |
| Caṇḍāla | Execution of criminals | Viṣṇu., XVI. 11 |
| Vaidehaka | Keeping women like dancing girls etc. and profiting by what they earn | Viṣṇu., XVI. 12 |
| Sūta | Managing horses | Viṣṇu., XVI. 13 |

The names of the mixed castes and their occupations enumerated above are neither exhaustive nor always precise and dependable, but they are comprehensive enough to give us an insight into the character and extent of the prejudices leading to the development of the concept of mixed castes. It is clear that a number of factors contributed towards the swelling of their ranks. As Nesfield had pointed out long ago, one can discern an underlying economic and technological bias, a sense of superiority by a people using more advanced techniques and contempt felt for the people using more primitive methods of production.³⁶ One, however, fails to agree entirely with his contention that the iron using Aryans felt a natural contempt for the craftsmen not using iron implements and that they (iron-using people) condemned the non-iron using trades as lower crafts.³⁷ It does not appear likely that during the period under survey a hunter, a basket maker or a chariot builder had not yet learnt the use of iron or metal implements. Moreover, according to most of the modern authorities the Aryan invaders of the Vedic period were an iron using people³⁸; the Rathakāra thus should not have been given the position of importance during the Vedic period. But it seems clear that most of the occupations found associated with the despised castes were gradually losing economic importance. In a society advancing in trade and commerce hunting, fishing, scavenging, disposal of dead, etc., were now professions that did not have much economic return. However, we must remember that a general bias against all kinds of manual labour had developed.³⁹ Even the

workers associated with the lucrative industries like textile and oil production were looked down upon. Weaving was described as a low craft, and oil pressing as a very disreputable profession. The blacksmith was included among the people whose food was forbidden to Brāhmaṇas.⁴⁰ This bias against manual labour developed probably as the result of the growing prosperity of the middle class who now enjoyed a great degree of leisure and comfort.⁴¹

Along with the economic another very potent factor for the rise and growth of the so-called mixed castes was ethnic exclusiveness and the resulting prejudices. This was also greatly responsible for the isolation of some groups from the main stream of the society and the growth of the practice of untouchability.^{41a} A number of the mixed castes were clearly non-Aryan ethnic groups: Āndhra, Meda, Niṣāda, Madgu, Cuñcu, etc., are some of the instances. Already in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (33. 6) Āndhras, Puṇḍras, Śabarās, Pulindas, Mūtibas, etc., are mentioned among the *dasyus* composing the lowest ranks of the society. As we have noted above, some of the non-Aryan and foreign tribes succeeded in attaining the ranks of the Kṣatriyas, probably through political power and influence. But even here prejudices lingered and they were not given absolute equality with the ordinary Kṣatriyas—they have been termed as *vrātyas*. It is interesting to note that most of such tribes given the status of Kṣatriyas by Manu (X. 22, 43-44) were the ones that played an important political role in post-Mauryan India.⁴² There were, however, a large number of small and insignificant ethnic groups scattered all over the country. Many of these in the wake

of the Aryan invasion withdrew to more inaccessible areas like forests and mountains. They preserved their independence and old way of life in contrast to those people who had accepted the Aryan domination and came to be called the *dāsas* and who formed the nucleus of the Śūdra *varṇa*. Thus, a distinction arose between the Śūdras, who were Aryanised to some extent, and these tribal groups. However, during the later period with the rise of large kingdoms and empires, for example, the Mauryan, this seclusion was inevitably disturbed to a very large extent.^{42a} Once the seclusion was broken these tribes had to be given a place within the society. They were now probably accepted as mixed castes. Mostly they still continued to live in forests and mountains. Manu uses the terms 'excluded' (*vāhyā*) and 'born outside the community' (*jātayo bahih*) for the mixed and degraded castes.⁴³ It is interesting to note that Kauṭilya (*Artha*. 2. 4. 32) mentions certain people whom he calls 'outsiders' (*bāhirika*), who were not to be allowed to enter the city. Kangle thinks that these were some wild tribes.⁴⁴ It is not unlikely that Kauṭilya had in mind some of the mixed castes which originally sprang from non-Aryan clans. In the *Arthaśāstra* (2. 1. 6), in a different context, we find a highly significant statement that the regions that lay beyond the frontier fortresses of settled areas and countryside were to be guarded by the trappers, Śābaras, Pulindas, Caṇḍālas and forest dwellers. It appears that these forest dwelling tribes were given a place in the society because of political necessity, hence their inclusion among the mixed castes. They, however, very largely continued to maintain their old way of life—tribal people show greater

persistence in perpetuating their customs and resist change more than civilized folk.⁴⁵ Kauṭilya thus very prudently prescribes that in the matter of the mixed castes precedence, i.e., established custom, and hereditary occupation were not to be disturbed.⁴⁶ We may conclude that many of the tribal groups dwelling in the forests and mountains beyond the settlements of 'genteel' folk were brought under subjection by the expanding new states and were included among the mixed castes.

The practising of what was regarded as unclean occupations and habits by some groups led to their inclusion among the mixed castes. Leather working, keeping and killing of animals, scavenging, working in burial grounds, disposal of dead, cleaning, shampooing, etc., were the usual occupations associated with the mixed castes.⁴⁷ The Śvapākas even ate dog's flesh. Unworthy and detestable conduct also might have led to the social degradation of certain people. This was the reason why public entertainers like the wrestlers, actors, snake-charmers, jugglers, dancers, etc., came to be counted as despised castes. The food of a musician or a stage-player was forbidden to a Brāhmaṇa. A Brāhmaṇa adopting the profession of the actor or singer (*kuśīlava*) was not to be invited to the *śrāddha*. Probably the participation of women along with men in public entertainment and stage shows and the comparative freedom of the women folk connected with these professions came to acquire disrepute. Manu (VIII. 362-53) thus reduces the rigour of punishment in the case of adultery with or violation of the actor's wife, since it was considered an accepted custom that an actor lived by

the earnings of his wife through entertaining other men. Kauṭilya (2. 27. 24-25) also treats the women of actors, dancers, singers, musicians, rope-walkers, bards and other public entertainers at par with the courtesan. The occupation of the Vaidehakas according to the **Viṣṇusmṛiti* (XVI. 12) was keeping dancing girls and public women and profiting from their earnings.

A few words also should be said regarding the so-called untouchables. Various terms as *antya*, *antyaaja*, *antyāvasāyin* have been used, not always uniformly, to denote the lowest castes, whose contact came to be regarded in varying degrees as defiling. The terms *antya* and *antyaaja* have been generally used as appellations for the lowest castes such as Caṇḍāla. Manu, however, appears to make a distinction between *antya* and *antyāvasāyin*, he uses both the terms separately in the same verse (IV. 79). An *antyāvasāyin* is said to have been an offspring of a Caṇḍāla by a Nīṣāda female (*Manu*. X. 39) or a child of a Śūdra male and Vaiśya female (*Vas*. XVIII. 3). It is not unlikely that the *antyāvasāyin* was a caste name rather than a generic term used for a whole class. The *Mitākṣarā* (on Yaj. III. 260) uses the term *antyāvasāyin* to denote the lowest social groups, Caṇḍālas, Śvapāka, etc., even lower than the *antyajās*. Whatever the phraseology that might have been in vogue it is clear that contact with certain groups of people came to be considered as polluting. Not only touching but even talking to a Caṇḍāla was an act bringing about impurity. Although the works of our period expressly attribute untouchability only to the Caṇḍālas, from the general trend of evidences in later works it appears that

other *antyajas* also suffered from the same disability in some degree or other. The Andhra, Meda, Śvapaca, *Antyāvasāyin*, etc., all had to stay away from the main residential areas of the village along with the Caṇḍālas. Already by the time of Patañjali a class of Śūdras had come into existence who were called *niravasita* i. e. who lived beyond the pale of the Aryan society and were considered so low that the vessel used by them for food could not be purified even by fire so as to be fit for use by any other *varna*. These Śūdras like Caṇḍālas and Mṛtapās have been contrasted with *aniravasita* Śūdra or those living within the pale of the Aryan society. The implication is clear : a class more degraded than the ordinary Śūdras meriting a greater degree of excommunication had been brought into existence.

We cannot form any accurate idea about the various social groups that bore the label of *antyas*, *antyajas* or *antyāvasāyins*. The confusion and uncertainty on this question is best demonstrated by Vijnāneśvara. The *Mitākṣarā* claiming the authority of Āpastamba enumerates the following seven : *rajaka* (washerman), *carmakāra* (leather worker), *naṭṭ* (dancer), *burūḍa* (worker in bamboo), *kaivarta* (fisherman), *meda*, *bhilla* (obviously aboriginal tribes) as *antyajas*.⁴⁸ Commenting on an earlier verse, however, the same work states that *antyajas* mean 'Caṇḍālas and others'.⁴⁹ The author takes a different position at a third place.⁵⁰ He seems to make a distinction between two groups of *antyajas*, the one enumerated above (the washerman etc.), and the other called *antyāvasāyins* (Caṇḍāla, Śvapaca, Kṣatri, Sūta, Vaidehika, Māgadha,

Āyogava) considered even lower than the first group. In the texts of our period, however, we do not find any specific list of the *antyās*, *antyaajas*, etc. But from the generally degraded position of the mixed castes especially the *pratilomas* it may be assumed that many of them formed the ranks of the untouchables⁵⁰

It has been noted that various factors such as sinful acts like murder or theft, religious and ethnic prejudices, unclean and low occupations, etc., lay at the roots of the growth of untouchability.⁵¹ Anthropological interpretations have also been offered. "Ideas of purity, whether occupational or ceremonial which are found to have been a factor in the genesis of caste are the very soul of the idea and practice of untouchability. The fact that in the sacrificial creation of mankind the last order mentioned as having been created from the feet of the creator is that of the Śūdra and that there was no class of human beings created thereafter adds flesh and blood to the ideas of ceremonial and occupational purity to engender the theory and practice of untouchability."⁵² Moreover, the fear of death-infection also seems to have played an important role in the genesis of untouchability. "There can be little doubt but the idea of untouchability originates in taboo, the repulsion originates in the fear of some sort of death infection and the underlying idea is not that the person himself is polluted by unclean work but that his mere association with death may infect others, with the probability of dying."⁵³ In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* we find an interesting passage in connection with the story of the god's attempt to rise above the *asuras* by the *Udagītha*. The

passage runs : 'this devatā (*prāna*) throwing aside the sin that was death to these devatās (*vak*, etc.) sent it to the ends of these quarters and he put down the sin of these devatās there ; therefore one should not go to people (outside the Aryan pale) nor to the ends (of the quarters) thinking "otherwise I may fall in with *Pāpaman* i.e., death".⁵⁴ We find therefore that certain people beyond the pale of the Aryan society came to be associated with death and contact with them was considered to be death inviting. That the occupations of a large number of mixed castes were connected with the execution and disposal of dead,⁵⁵ the hunting and fishing,⁵⁶ the warfare,⁵⁷ the leather working,⁵⁸ the playing on drums,⁵⁹ etc., assume special significance when looked at from the point of view of their association with death. The taboo against the food of a physician, a hunter, an Ugra, a blacksmith, a dealer in weapons, etc. (*Manu*. IV. 212, 215), may also be interpreted in the same light i. e. association with death.

Whatever might have been the theoretical reasons the fact remains that the mixed castes, and many of them were untouchables, normally led a life of deprivation and misery and represented the lowest rung in the social order. Their condition was very much the same as obtained till very recently.⁶⁰

RECAPITULATIONS AND CONCLUSION

From the study of the places, privileges, and interrelationships of different social groups we find that the *varṇa* structure, under the pressure of economic developments and the consequent new value orientation centring round wealth and power, had to accomodate new socio-economic groups within its matrix. Some of these groups cut across the *varṇa* divisions leading to a bifurcation of each *varṇa*, manifested much more strongly in the three upper *varṇas* than in the fourth, into two sharp divisions based on success or failure to control the means of effective economic and political power. Each of the three upper *varṇas* had a small 'dominant' and a large 'commoner' group, the dominant group being the one which succeeded in securing a place in the power structure of the society.

The means and methods adopted for seizing controls of power differed from one *varṇa* to another in accordance with the ascribed role of each *varṇa* within the traditional (i. e., the Vedic *Puruṣasūkta* theory of social differentiations which had acquired sanctity and theoretical acceptance) *varṇa* framework. The Brāhmaṇa method was *śāstric*. As the repository of *śāstric* knowledge he claimed the exclusive right to interpret, and in effect to determine, the rules of conduct including the conduct of the state. He reached the political decision making through the Prime Minister, the *purohita*, the *rājaguru*; the legislation and Judiciary through his right to interpret the *dharma*. Through his

right to receive gift (*dāna*) and claim to the exemption from taxation and levies (the claim was not always real) he endeavoured for economic gains. The religious life of the society completely and the intellectual life very largely were dominated by the Brāhmaṇas through their exclusive right to priestation and teaching. The Kṣatriya's attempt to control the arteries of power found expression through his hallowed duty of 'protecting people', through army and bureaucracy; and the Vaiśya's through exploiting his wealth and hold over the economy.

The abler members of these three upper *varṇas* who together formed 'the elite group' of the society were trying to reach out, and were competing with each other in doing so, to the same end, i. e., securing an effective place in the power structure. Since the mutual competition between the different *varṇa* segments of the elite group took place through different avenues and since each segment endeavoured to capture a different area of the power structure through its respective sphere of influence, the frictions of the competition did not hurt the *varṇa* structure very hard. Even when there was an overlapping of the avenues of competition, especially in the area of economic privileges, the *varṇa* structure was able to absorb the shocks by slightly stretching the system.

The growth of a dominant section in each of the three upper *varṇas* was not just a divisive factor leading to the segmentation of these *varṇas*, it also acted as a cohesive force against the *varṇa* exclusiveness giving birth to the elite group consisting of the dominant members of the three *varṇas*. The social relationship that characterised the elite

group was, in Max Weber's terminology, "associative." The social action within the group rested on a rationally motivated adjustment of interests. It was both 'open' and 'closed.' It was open for the members of the three upper *varṇas*, membership was not determined by birth ; entry to the group was possible through achievement and conforming to the standards of the group. The door of entry was heavier for the Vaiśyas than the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyaś. It was 'closed' for the Śūdras and Antyajās (See Max Weber, *The theory of Social and Economic Organization*. tr. A. H. Henderson and Talcott Parsons, Glencoe, III, The Free Press, 1947, Chap. I, sections 9-17). The group, which was also a kind of a 'status group', had its appropriate marks and symbols : (i) all members had to be twice-borns—the *upanayana* and Vedic education being the most important mark ; (ii) wealth, political power and influence, and the power of patronage were the other marks. Śūdras and Antyajās were excluded because they were not *dvija*, an ignorant Brāhmaṇa was kept out because he was not versed in the *Vedas* ; even a cultivated but poor Brāhmaṇa was not included in the group because he lacked political and economic power.

Economically or politically the upper *varṇas* were not homogeneous groups, a wide gulf of power and privileges separated the dominant section from the rest. In some cases at least, there was a sense of hostility between the dominant group and the rest within a *varṇa*. This seems to have been particularly strong among the Brāhmaṇa *varṇa*—the money-and power-seeking Brāhmaṇas (*devalaka*, king's servants, the Brāhmaṇas greedy for *dāna*, etc.) were

objects of censure and ridicule. Hence, the paradoxical attitudes towards the model of life style of the Brāhmaṇas are to be found in the *Smṛtis*, the advocacy of the ideal of plain living and high thinking on the one hand and the endeavour to secure various economic and political privileges on the other. Similarly, among the Vaiśyas a wide gulf separated the successful commercial men from the ordinary peasant folk.

There was a sense of comradeship between the members of the dominant elite group belonging to different *varṇas*—the sons of the *purohita*, the king, the general and the merchant are great friends in a number of our folk tales. There was much more common between the life style of an *asitikoṭi mahālsāla* Brāhmaṇa and a *seṭṭhi* than between a *mahālsāla* Brāhmaṇa and a poor village Brāhmaṇa priest. Same was the distance between a *seṭṭhi* and a Vaiśya cultivator. Thus, inspite of *varṇa* differences the elites formed a composite group.

As for the Śūdras and Antyajās, however, there was no scope for working one's way up to the elite ruling group through individual achievement and initiative. The wealthy, influential and powerful members of these orders (Śūdras and Antyajās) did form an influential group within their respective orders and they were considered to be leaders of their own *varṇa* or caste both by the members of their own order as well as by the upper *varṇas*. These leaders were treated with greater considerations by the members of the higher *varṇa* also but their leadership was recognized as operating only within the limits of their own *varṇa* or caste affairs—they would not be normally admitted

to the general leadership (or the elite group) of the entire society. Thus, we find the wealthy *sat* Śūdras were given some religious and educational concessions but these did not entitle them to wield any real influence beyond the limits of their own *varṇa*.

Social ranking, therefore, should not be identified with *varṇa* hierarchy—all Brāhmaṇas, for example, should not be ranked above all Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas. In fact, we have to adopt two different standards for measuring social ranks. First, the society has to be divided into two categories : 'elites' and 'non-elites'. As we saw above, each of the three upper *varṇas* had a small influential and dominant group. These dominant groups of the three upper *varṇas* together formed the 'elites' of the society. The rest (the commoners of the three higher *varṇas* plus the Śūdras and the Antyajās) belonged to the 'non-elite' category. For the ranking of the members of the elite, power, money and personal achievements were as important as the *varṇa* position ; whereas, for the rest, the *varṇa* position was the most important, almost the sole, factor determining one's station in life.

References and Notes

CHAPTER I

1. Certain elements of Mauryan art and architecture once thought to be inspired by Iranian influence have been found to be of indigenous origin by recent researches, Sharma, G. R., 'New Light on the Origin of Stone Architecture and True Arch in India, Excavation of the Palace of Early Kings of Kauśāmbī', *Proceedings of the Twenty-sixth International Congress of Orientalists*, New Delhi, 1966; Agrawal, V. S., *Indian Art*, Chap. VII. For older view see Hultsch, *CII*, I, pp. xxiv-xxxv; Smith, V., *IA*, 1905, pp. 201-03; Spooner, D. B., *ASIR*, 1912-13, pp. 73 ff; Ray, N. R., *Maurya and Śuṅga Art*, Chap. I-IV; Wheeler, R. E. M., *Ancient India*, no. 4, pp. 94 ff.

2. Kuṣāṇa long coat was adopted by the Gupta kings on their coins, Altekar, A. S., *The Coinage of the Gupta Empire*, pp. 14 ff. Full sleeved and strap buttoned coat is found also in one of the Bharhut pictures, Ghurye, G. S., *Indian Costume*, p. 95; distinctive Indo-Scythian head-dress is found worn by kings in statues from Mathuṛa, Rosenfield, J., *The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, pl. 14-16; Levin, Bongard. G. M., *India and Central Asia*, ed., A. Guha, p. 99.

3. *Cārudatta*, I. 5-6, tr. Woolner and Sarup.

4. *Ibid.*, II. 7.

5. Wilson, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, English tr., p. 388; Cf. *Matsya Purāṇa*, 273, 25-48.

6. Bongard-Levin, G. M., 'India and Central Asia' in *Central Asia*, ed., A. Guha, p. 99.

6a. *Ibid.*

7. Sharma, G. R., India and Central Asia from C. 6th century B. C. to 6th century A. D., in *Central Asia*, ed., A. Guha, pp. 111-12; Cf. Sharma, G. R. *Kuṣāṇa Studies*, pp. 10 ff.

8. *Matsya Purāṇa*, Eng. tr by Taluqdar of Oudh. 273, 25-48.

9. *Yugapurāṇa* text and tr. of the relevant extracts. JBORS. 1928, pp. 402-414, JBORS., 1930, pp. 18 ff; Cf. *sārthavāhinī*, *vanijinī*, *mahārathinī*, *mahābhājī*, *Luders List*, nos. 30, 1021, 1037, 1111, 1285, 1292.

10. Senart, *EI*, VIII, Ins. no. 5; *Luders List*, no 1126.

11. The question of the ownership of land has been a controversial issue. See Ghoshal, U. N., *The Agrarian System in Ancient India*; Jayaswal, K. P., *Hindu Polity*, II, pp. 174 ff; Jayaswal, *Manu and Yājñavalkya*, p. 105; Kane, P. V., *HDS*, II, pt. 2, pp. 365-69; *CHI*, I, pp. 427-28; Bose, A. N., *SRENI*, I, Chap. II; Gopal, M. H., *Mauryan Public Finance*, p. 62; Kangle, *Kautiliya Arthaśāstra*, III, pp. 169-71; Basak, R. G., 'Land Sale Documents of Ancient Bengal', in *Ashutosh Silver Jubilee Volumes*, III, part II; Gopal, L., 'Ownership of Agricultural Land in Ancient India', *JESHO*, VI, etc.

12. *Yathā koci puriso vanaṁ sodhetvā bhūmim nīharati tassa sā bhūmiti jana voharati na c'esā bhūmi tena pavatturātaṁ bhūmim kāraṇaṁ katvā bhūmisāmiko nāma hoti*, *Milinda*, p. 219.

13. *Manu*, IX. 44. The husband-wife relationship between the king and earth has been stressed to prove that the right to levy was the king's marital right to 'enjoy' earth and had nothing to do with his so called duty of protection of people, vide. Jha, D. N., *Revenue System in Post Maurya and Gupta Times*, pp. 19-20. Husband's conjugal right, however, was linked up with his duty of protection and maintenance of wife, *Yaj.*, I. 81-82.

14. *EI*, VIII, no. 10, pp. 78 ff.

15. *Ājakaṁ kheta*, Nasik inscription of Gautamīputra Śātakaṛṇī, *EI*, VIII, Ins. no. 5.

16. *Luders List*, no. 1327.

17. " *mānyāḥ pūjyāś ca nityadā*, kings should always be honoured and revered as gods. A god and yet not wholly a god, for besides having a *nararūpa* (human

form) the king is 'somewhat human' (*kiñcid bhavati mānuṣaḥ*)." Hopkins, E. W., *JĀOS*, 51, p. 312.

18. *Śukranītisāra*, I. 188; I owe this reference to my teacher Prof. J. S. Negi. The point has been emphasised by Prof. Negi, *Some Indological Studies*, II (Manuscript) in the article entitled 'Narada's king, section VII'. However, the *Śukranītisāra*, according to some belongs to the first half of the 19th century, Gopal, L., *BSOAS*, 25, pt. 3 (1962), pp. 524-51.

19. *Milinda*, p. 147; For the rising importance of the village lord see Yadava, B. N. S., 'Some Aspects of the Changing Order in India during the Śaka Kuṣāṇa Age', in *Kuṣāṇa Studies* ed., Sharma, G. R. pp. 80-83.

20. Sharma, G. R., *Kuṣāṇa Studies*, p. 83; *Excavations at Kauśāmbī* 1957-59, pp. 22, 56, pl. 43, no. 39; *MAI*, no. 74, p. 103, pl. LIX, no. 4.

21. Rhys Davids, T. W., *The Questions of king Milinda*, *SBE XXXV*, p. 171, Adhya quoting the opinion of Prof. G. Manley, Head, Geography Department, Bedford College, London University, says that the statement in the *Milinda-pañha* is evidently wrong, Adhya, *Early Indian Economics*, p. 42, no. 6. There is some obvious confusion in the passage since it specifies the three periodical rains as those of the rainy season, of the winter months and that of the two months *Asālha* and *Sāvana*. The rainy season in India, today includes, *Āsāḍa* and *Srāvaṇa*. Reading of the passage in Trenckner is: *loke tayo yeva meghā gaṇīyanti: Vassiko hemantiko Pāvussaka ti, Milinda*, p. 114. It appears that three seasons were rainy season, late autumn, and winter.

22. *Udakabhāgaṃ*, is mentioned in *Artha*, 2. 24. 18; but is not found in the *Smṛitis*. It varied from 1/5th to 1/3rd of the produce, Gopal, M. H., *Mauryan Public Finance*, p. 74; Kangle, *op. cit.*, III, p. 174.

23. It has been argued that the bias against craft and industry in the *Smṛitis* did not affect all classes. These rules were specially meant for the Brāhmaṇas in order to prevent them from deviating from spiritual and religious

pursuits. These rules thus did not have much economic significance. Das, S. K., *Economic History of Ancient India*, pp. 189-90.

24. The Life of *nāgaraka* described in the *Kāmasūtra* may be taken as an example, Win Theodore de Bary, etc., ed., *Sources of Indian Tradition*, pp. 260-61.

25. *Aṅga*, pp. 160-61.

26. *kārpāsa*, *kaśēya*, *cīnāmśuka*, *cinapatta*, *patroṇa*, *paṭṭa*, *ksauma*, *dukūla*, *saṇa*, *urna* etc. to give only a few of the terms used for textile materials in the literature of our period, *Mbh.*, XIII. 111. 104-106. *Brihatkalpa Sūtra*, IV ; *Artha.*, Bk. 2, Chap. 23 : *Aṅga.*, pp. 163-64. 221, 230, 232 etc.

27. *Manu.* VIII. 397 ; *Yāj.*, II. 179-80.

28. *Aṅga.*, p. 160.

29. *Aṅga.* p. 160.. For investment to guilds see *Lüders L.st*, nos, 1133, 1157 ; *EL*, VIII, pp. 82ff, 88ff ; Mirashi, V. V., *CII*, II, pt I, pp. 3-4 : Sircar, D. C., *Sel. Ins* pp. 157-160.

30. *Artha.*, 2. 21. 22-23.

31. *Aṅgavijjā*. n. 160.

32. See *infra*, Chap IV, pp. 123-29, 143-44 for interpretations of the terms *hiraṇyaka* and *suvarṇaka*.

33. *Aṅga*, appendix 5th, pp. 355-57 : sculptures of the period show how fond people were of ornaments, Cunningham, A., *Stupa of Bhārhut*, pp. 34-39.

34. We have already noted that the import of precious metals was exempted from duties. Besides, during periods of emergency levies, goldsmiths and dealers in gold and other precious articles were treated in a markedly lenient manner, *Artha.*, 5. 2. 17-23 ; for details about the significance of this interesting passage see *infra* Chap IV. n. 48.

35. See *infra*, Chap. V.

36. Adhya. *op. cit.*, p. 63.

37. *Manu.*, IX. 329

38. *Aṅga.*, p. 71, 160.

39. Maity, S. K., *Economic Life*, p. 116. A wealthy merchant like Cārudatta would employ a whole-time shampooer, *Cārudatta*, Act II. Even during his impoverish-

ed days he would pay quite a bit of attention to make-up and use of perfumes. When Cārudatta gave his garment to Vasantasenā mistaking her for his own maid she found the garment smelling of fragrance and thought in her mind. 'This garment has a scent of perfume, that shows he is not indifferent to the „vanities of youth.' *Cārudatta, Thirteen Trivandrum plays Attributed to Bhāsa*, tr., Woolner and Sarup, p. 82.

40. Sharma, G. R., *Excavations at Kauśāmbī, Memoirs. ASI*, no. 74, pp. 97ff.

41. *Aṅga*. Chap 53. For the identification of these plants see the introductions to the *Angavijja* by Motichandra and V. S. Agrawala, pp. 55, 84.

42. e. g., Kapittha (Kapisthala ?), Mulaka, Atimukta (Abhimukta of A. P. I. ?) etc., *Aṅga*, *ibid*.

43. *Aṅga*, p. 160.

44. *Manu*, IX. 329

45. *Lüders List*, nos. 757, 181, 98 etc. However, these might have been expressions of religious fervour of the donors rather than of prosperity.

46. For the finds of iron objects. see Sharma, G. R., *MA SI*, no. 74, pp. 103-4; Sharma, G. R., *Excavations at Kauśāmbī* 1957-59, pp. 46-48, 51-56; Lal, B. B., *Excavations at Hastināpur*, pp. 95-99; Altekar and Mishra, *Report on Kumrāhar Excavations*, pp. 51-55.

47. *Adhya*, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.

48. *Caraka Saṁhitā, Sūtrasthāna*. V. 71; *Suśruta, Saṁhitā, Sūtrasthāna*. VIII. 29. *Ācāraṅgāsūtra*, II. 6. 1.

49. Vide the description of city populace in *Milinda*, p. 331.

50. *Lüders List*, no. 1165.

51. *Aṅga*, appendix 5th, pp. 349-50; *Mahāvastu*, Eng., tr., III, pp. 110-114, 443-44, gives even a longer list.

52. *Artha*, 4. 1. 2., "Employers of artisans capable of making good an article, those good at entrusting material, (and) artisans working with their own capital should accept

entrusted material with the guarantee of the guild." Kangle, *op. cit.*, II.

53. *Artha.*, 4. 1. 2. 3. Customs of guilds and associated boides were recognized by law, *Manu.*, VIII. 41; *Yāj.*, I. 361; *Brh.*, XVII. 19-22; *Nārada*, X. 2-7. Orders of the executive officers of guilds were to be obeyed, representatives of guilds to king's court were to hand over the presents received from the king to the guilds and not to keep these for personal use, *Yāj.*, II. 188-91.

54. *Mahāvastu*, Eng. tr., III, pp. 110, 443; *Mbh.* *Vanaparvan*, 249. 16; Buddha Prakash, *Aspects of Indian History and Civilization*, p. 18.

55. Kangle, *op. cit.*, III, p. 185.

56. For wage rates see *infra*, Chap. V.

57. *Artha.*, 3. 14. 12-17; 4. 2. 18.

58. *Artha.*, 4. 2. 28.

59. *Artha.*, 8. 4. 35; Kangle, *op. cit.*, II, p. 462.

60. This aspect of the employer-employee relationship and its influence on the economic and social set up has been treated *infra*, pp. 114 ff.

61. *Milinda*, p. 1; *SBE*, XXXV, p. 2. n. 2.

61a. Buddha Prakash, *Aspects of Indian History and Civilization*, p. 23.

62. An attempt has been made by Srivastava, B., *Trade and Commerce in Ancient India*, pp. 65-82. Also see Kosambi, D. D., *The Culture and Civilization of India*, p. 112.

63. *Milinda*, p. 359; Rhys Davids, *The Questions of King Milinda*, *SBE*, XXXVI, p. 269.

63a. *Artha.*, 2. 28.

64. *Aṅga*, pp. 146, 166. See also Motichandra and Agrawala, Introduction to *Aṅga.*, pp. 49, 73.

65. Adhya, *op. cit.*, Chap. on Trade, *passim*.

66. Mukerji, B., 'Kuṣāṇa Coins in Abyssinia', *IHO.*, XXXVI, 1960.

67. For the Survey of western exports and imports see Warmington, *Commerce Between the Roman Empire and*

India, Chapt. II ; Adhya, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-51 ; *Comp. HI*, pp. 441-46.

68. *Artha.*, Bk. 4. Chap. 2 ; *Manu.*, IX. 257 ; *Yāj.*, II. 244-54.

69. *Artha.*, 2. 1. 38, 2. 6. 8-9.

70. *Mahābhāṣya*, II, 1. 69, p. 404.

71. *Ibid.*, II, 1. 5, p. 393, II, 1. 1, p. 365, II, 1. 40, p. 390, V, 2. 76, p. 387, III, 2. 84, p. 111 ; Puri, B. N., *India in The Time of Pātañjali*, pp. 113-14, has collected the evidence of the social evils of the time.

72. Rhys Davids, *The Questions of King Milinda*, SBE, XXXV, pp. 49-50.

CHAPTER II

1. The distinction between *varṇa* and *jāti* made long ago by Senart (*Caste in India*, pts. II & III passim) has been affirmed by the modern sociologists, Hutton, *Caste in India*, pp. 64 ff ; Karve, I, *Kinship Organization in India*, pp 5 ff. ; Srinivas, M. N., 'Varṇa and Caste' in *Caste in Modern India*, pp. 63-69 ; Dumont, L., *Homo Hierarchicus* pp. 106-14 etc. The term 'caste' is now normally used, for *Jāti* or *Jāta* ; *Varṇa* being translated as 'class' 'category' 'estate,' 'order' etc. However, in some works *Varṇa* is still translated as 'Caste' Weber, Max, *The religion of India*. Even Hocart uses the word caste when he actually meant *varṇa* ; Hocart, *Caste*, pp. 23-24. For some suggested renderings of the terms *varṇa* and *Jāti* see Trautmann. T. R. *JESHO*, VII, 1964, pp. 196-201.

2. Inconsistency between the four *varṇa* theory and the multiple social groups that constituted the social reality was sought to be smoothed over through various explanations, *Mbh.*, *Vanaparvan*, 149. 18 ; *Śāntiparvan*, 188. 1-17, 297. 2-9 ; Nīlakāntha's commentary on these ; *Manu*, X. 6-56 ; *Yāj.*, I. 91-95 ; *Artha*, 1. 3. 5-8. See Jha V., '*Varṇa-saṁkara* in the Dharmasutras : 'Theory and Practice', *JESHO*, XIII, pt. III, 1970. The discrepancies between the

theory and practice of caste during the early mediaeval period have been underlined by Derrett. J. D. M., *JESHO*, VII, 1964, pp. 73-120. Most of his remarks would be valid for the earlier period also.

3. 'the four-caste system is a pure figment', Hocart, *Caste* pp. 23-24. Although, a statement like this is sometimes found, the relevance of the *varṇa* division even to the contemporary Indian social structure is generally recognised, Srinivas, M. N., *Caste in Modern India*, pp. 63-9; Desai, A. R., *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, p. 223; Dumont, L., *Homo Hierarchicus*, pp. 104-14, Mandelbaum, D. G., *Society in India*, p. 24.

4. *Buddhist India*, pp. 38-39.

5. *Tapahśrutābhyāṁ yo hīno jātibrāhmaṇa eva saḥ*, *Mahābhāṣya*, V. 1. 115, p. 363. L. 15; Puri, B. N. *India in the Time of Patañjali*, p. 90.

6. *Manu*. II. 36 ff., III. 24, 35, V. 83, 92; *Yāj.* III. 22. In case of still birth, *Bṛhaspati* (Aśauca, 34-35) reversing the normal gradation, prescribes 10, 7, 5, 3 days respectively for the Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras.

7. *Manu*., IV. 205-16, 84-91; "The castes that have always yielded to impulses are despised by the higher classes, whose higher status is due to their having more observances, greater purity. The greater the freedom, the lower the caste." Derrett, J. D. M., *Religion, Law and the State in India*. p. 64.

8. Dumont, L., *Homo Hierarchicus*, p. 108. Also see Kane, *HDS*, II. pt. I. p. 105; *Mitākṣarā* on *Yāj.* I., 118, elaborates on the distinction between *dharma* and *Jivikā*.

9. Derrett, *op. cit.* p. 125.

10. Aiyangar, K. V. R., *Kṛitya-Kalpataru*, of Lakṣmidhara II. Gṛihastakāṇḍa. introduction, pp. 63, 87-88; Derrett, *op. cit.* pp. 122-47.

11. *dhana mūlāḥ kriyāḥ sarvā*, *Nārada*, I. 43, Jolly's translation.

12. *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*, XII Lecture, p. 3-19.

13. *Manu*, VII. 133, VIII. 394; *Vas*, I. 42 ff, XIX. 23;

Āpas, II. 10. 26. 10 ; *Bṛha*, XVII. 2-3 ; *Mbh*, XII. 76. 5-11, 77. 2 ff, *Artha*., 2. 1. 7, 3. 10. 9 ; also see Sen, B. C.; *Economics in Kauṭilya*, pp. 19-22.

14. *Strabo*. XV. 1. 32 ; *Viṣṇu*, III. 26 ff ; Sharma, R. S., however, is of the opinion that the Brāhmaṇas, as also Kṣatriyas, were exempted from taxation, *Studies in the Cultural History of India*, ed. by Guy. S. Metraux & Francois, p. 37.

15. *Yāj.*, I. 313.

16. *Artha*., I. 9. 1 ff ; *Manu*, VII. 54 ff ; *Yāj.*, I. 313. Ruben, Walter., *Kālidāsa, The Human Meaning of His Works*, p. 19.

17. *Manu*., VIII. 1, 10-11 ; Cf. *Yāj.*, II. 1-3. Though originally only the Brāhmaṇas could be the members of *sabhā* later powerful business magnates. *śreṣṭhins* and *vaṇiks* were also admitted in it, Sen Gupta, N. C., *Evolution of Ancient Indian Law*, pp. 39-40.

18. Derrett, *op. cit.* p. 183 ; Cf. Aiyangar. K. V. R., *Rājadharmā*, pp. 23, 133.

19. Jayaswal, K. P., *Manu and Yājñavalkya*, pp. 91, 116-17 ; *amātyāḥ prāḍvivāko vā yat kuryuḥ kāryaṁ anyathā tat svayaṁ nṛpatih kuryāttān sahasraṇca daṇḍayet*, *Manu*., IX. 234.

20. *Manu*., VIII. 9 ; *Yāj.*, II. 3. See *Mitākṣarā*'s specifications of the qualifications of the *prāḍvivāka*, *Mitākṣarā* on *Yāj.*, II. 3.

21. *Artha*., 3. 6. 17 ; *Manu*., IX. 152-53 ; *Yāj.*, II. 125.

22. *Manu*., IX. 155 ; see note 155, p. 358, *SBE*, XXV, *The laws of Manu* by Bühler. Once it was believed that the law of inheritance was regulated in accordance with the heir's duty to perform the *śrāddha* of the persons to whose estate he succeeds, Shastri, D. R., *Origin and Development of the Rituals of Ancestor worship in India*. The view, however, has been disputed, Sarvādhikari, *Hindu Law of Inheritance*, pp. 709-10.

23. *Manu*., III. 151, 164, 65, XI. 60, 198. Among the Brāhmaṇas professional priests were not held in high esteem.

Learning and *guruship* were more honourable, Bhattacharya, J. N., *Hindu Castes and Sects*, p. 19.

24. Kane, *HDS*, II. pt. I, p. 213 ; cf. *Manu*, IV. 35. 84-91 ; *Yāj*, I. 130, 140, III. 41.

25. With the growth of trade and commerce and the development of cities, capitalism, etc., the social status of the ploughman tends to decline everywhere. In India another accompanying reason for this was the employment of Śūdra labourers to tilling, Weber Max. *The Religion of India*, pp. 83-87.

26. *Baudh.*, II. 4. 20-21 ; cf. *Vas.*, II. 32-33 ; *Baudh.*, II. 4. 22-23.

27. *Manu.*, X. 85 ff ; cf. *Yāj.*, III 36-39 ; cf. *Gaut.*, VII. 8-15 ; *Āpas.*, I. 20. 10-13 ; *Vas.*, II. 24-31 ; *Baudh.*, I. 2. 4-5, II. 2. 27.

28. Even the lowly placed unclean Śūdras were able to induce some Brāhmaṇas to minister to their simple religious needs ; these Brāhmaṇa priests went down in the caste hierarchy among the Brāhmaṇas but some at least were prepared to brave that, Blunt, E. A. H., *The Caste System of North India*, p. 300.

29. Senart, *Caste in India*, p. 96. The concept of *āpatkāla* also served to mollify the seriousness of social misconduct and the rigour of punishments and infused an element of compassion into law—the surrounding circumstances of the alleged offender was taken into account, Derrett, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-96.

30. For instances of Kṣatriya pride see Fick, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-87 ; cf. *Dīgha Nikāya*, III. 124, etc. A legend in the *Jain Kalpasūtra*, II. 22 states how before his birth Mahāvira was transferred from the womb of a Brāhmaṇa lady to that of a Kṣatriya, Jain, J. C., *Life in Ancient India as Depicted in the Jain Canons* p. 140.

31. *Br. up.*, I. 4 ; cf. *Manu.*, VII. 4-7 ; conversely respect for the Brāhmaṇas is found in Jain-Buddhist works, *Ācāraṅgasūtra*, 1. 7. 1 ; 1. 8. 2 ; *Milinda*, p. 215 ; Fick, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-91.

32. *Uttarādhyayanasūtra*. XXV. 33.
33. *Suttanipāta*, III. 9. 57.
34. *Dhammapada*, 393.
35. *Yāj.*, III. 65-66 ; Derrett, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-72.
36. Aiyangar, K. V. R., *Hindu View of Life according to Dharmaśāstra*, p. 62. Cf. Sarkar, B. K., *Political Institutions and Theories of Hindus*, p. 206.
37. Rhys Davids, *The Questions of King Milinda.*, SBE XXXVI, p. 27.
38. *Ācāraṅgasūtra*, I. 5. 2 ; cf. *Dhammapada*, 401 ; *Suttanipāta*, Vaseṭṭhasutta, 62.
39. *Milinda*, p. 178.
40. *Ibid.*, I. 22 ; Cf. Manu's insistence (II. 156-58) on the importance of Vedic study for a Brāhmaṇa.
41. Rhys Davids' gloss that the Vedic lore really mean the three *piṭakas* (SBE, XXXV, p. 34, n. 1) does not carry conviction since the passage clearly distinguishes between the two by mentioning them separately. *Milindapañha* also speaks of all the four *Vedas*, pp. 3, 178. Nāgasena, however, was born in a Brāhmaṇa family. *Vedas* were not generally reviled by the Jains, only the Brāhmaṇical misinterpretation of the true spirit of the *Vedas* was criticised, *Uttarādhyayanasūtra*, XII. 15, XXV. 11.
42. *Jāt.* I. 356, 463 ; II. 53, 243 ; III. 219, etc. cf. *Suttanipāta*, 594-95 ; *Milinda*, pp. 10, 178. One cannot be sure about the exact nature of these eighteen sciences. In the *Milindapañha* in connection with king Milinda's learning we meet the following passage : "Many were the arts and sciences he knew—holy traditions and secular law ; the Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika systems of philosophy ; arithmetic ; music ; medicine ; the four Vedas, the Purāṇas, and the Itihāsas ; astronomy, magic, causation, and spells ; the art of war ; poetry ; conveyancing—in a word the "whole nineteen". *Milinda.*, p. 3. See also Rhys Davids, SBE, XXXV, p. 6, n. 3.
43. *Milinda.*, pp. 10, 236 ; also see supra n. 12.

44. *Milinda.*, p. 274 ff. However, see Rhys Davids' remarks, *SBE*, XXXVI, p. 120, 1 sq.
45. *Milinda.*, p. 225.
46. For punishments for hurting and slandering Brāhmaṇas, see *Nimi Jātaka* Cowell, etc., VI., p. 58-59 ; cf. *Manu.*, IV. 164-69.
47. Fick, *op. cit.*, p. 212.
48. Pusalker, A. D. (*Bhāsa a Study*, pp. 356-57), however, quotes Bhāsa to show that a Brāhmaṇa was immune from capital punishment for all offences.
49. *Suttanipāta*, I. 7. 14.
50. Rhys Davids, *The Questions of King Milinda*, *SBE*, XXXVI, p. 27.
51. *The Mahāvastu*, Eng. tr. J. Jones, Vol. II, pp. 80 ff.
52. The *Niṣādagotra* in the *Ganapāṭha* of Pāṇini, IV. 1. 100, might have been *Niṣāda* Brāhmaṇas, Kosambi, D. D., 'The Basis of Ancient Indian History'. *JAOS* LXXV, no. I, p. 44. Also see Siddhanta, N. K., *The Heroic Age of India*, p. 130 ff ; Karve, *Kinship Organization*, pp. 55 ff.
53. Such *gotra* names as Gautama, Bharadvāja, Kauṇḍinya, Kārṣṇāyana, Kauśika, Ātreya, Hārīta, Kāśyapa, Vatsa etc. are found in *Lüders List*, nos. 82, 1494, 68, 967, 1035, 1174, 1194, 1195, 1196, 1200, 1205, 1328 etc. *Gotra* meaning originally a cattle enclosure probably represented a complex of houses or houses and cattle-shed, property of a patri-family. A *gotra* was thus a family unit known by the name of the male head of the family, occasionally it was the name of a well-known immediate ancestor. *Pravaras* were famous ancestor-sages whom Brāhmaṇas of each *gotra* started claiming as their ancestors. Later by the time of Baudhāyana *gotras* and *pravaras* were organised into a system of exogamous clans, Karve, *Kin ship Organization*, pp. 51 ff., Cf. Brough, J., *The Early Brāhmanical System of Gotra and Pravara*, pp. 25 ff. However, we should not lose sight of an important fact that the same *gotra* is found shared by people of different castes, Hutton, *Caste in India*, p. 56.

54. Bose, A. N., *SRENI*. Vol. I, p. 63. R. S. Sharma, admitting that Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas were becoming big landholders, feels that 'a greater portion of the land was in possession of *gahapatis* (peasant proprietors) or *kuṭumbikas* (well-to-do peasants)', *Studies in the Cultural History of India*, Ed. by G., Metraux and F. Crouzet, p. 37. For Brāhmaṇas doing agriculture see *Milinda*, p. 8; *Jāt.* III. 163, 293, IV. 276, V. 68, etc.

55. Fick, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

56. Fick, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

57. *Mahāvastu*, Eng. tr., Jones, Vol. I., p. 259.

58. *Manu.*, VI. 50; *Aṅga*, introduction, p. 35. Astrologer Brāhmaṇa was held in contempt till very recently, Bhattacharya, J. N. *Hindu Castes and Sects*, pp. 137-38.

59. Jones, *Mahāvastu*, Vol. II, p. 29.

60. *Suśruta Sainhitā*, I. 2; *Caraka Sainhitā*, 6. 1, 3, 50, 31; Cf. *Manu*, IV. 179-80; *Yāj.*, I. 157-58; *Śāntiparva*, 249, 14-17; *Artha.*, 2. 1. 7; Sternbach, *Juridical Studies in Ancient Indian Law*, pt. I, pp. 280-300.

61. Kane, P. V., *Hindu Customs and Modern Law*, pp. 13 ff; Ghosal, U. N., *A History of Indian Political Ideas*, p. 311; Jha. G., *Hindu Law in its Sources*, pp. 1 ff; Kangle, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 222 ff; Derrett, J. D. M., *JESHO*, VII, pp. 89-93.

62. Thus a real Brāhmaṇa is the same as an *arhat* in the Buddhist works *Dhammapada*. XXVIth Chapter; *Suttanipāta*, III. 9 or an ideal Jain mendicant to the Jain (*Uttarādhyayanasūtra*, XXXVth lecture).

63. Priestly *devala* Brāhmaṇas were as much condemned by the *Smṛitis* as the Jain-Buddhist works. See *Manu.*, III. 152; Kane, *HDS*, II, pt. I, p. 109, n. 232.

64. The earliest instance of the foreign admiration for Brāhmaṇas is furnished by the Greek writers narrating Alexander's encounter with Brāhmaṇa philosophers, Strabo, XV, C. 715. The tradition continued down to the medieval and modern periods.

65. This disparagement was shared by the intellectuals

of all the circles, Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain. Even the intellectuals among Śūdras also disapproved of these Brāhmaṇas. Manu (VIII, 272) says that a Śūdra who arrogantly teaches Brāhmaṇas their duty should be punished.

CHAPTER III

1. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, II, p. 251.
2. Ketkar, S. V., *History of Caste in India*, pp. 93-95.
3. Ketkar, *op. cit.*, p. 94.
4. Weber, M., *The religion of India*, pp. 10, 16 ff; Thapar, R., 'Social Mobility in Ancient India with special Reference to Elite Groups' in *Indian Society : Historical Probings*, ed. R. S. Sharma, pp. 106-07.
5. *anuvāsita* Śūdras, i. e., the Śūdras living beyond the pale of the Aryan society. *Mahābhāṣya*, I. 475; Pāṇini, II. 4. 10; Basham, A. L., *The Wonder That Was India*, pp. 143-44; cf. *Manu.*, X. 22, 44; Law, B. C., *Some Kṣatriya Tribes in Ancient India*, pp. 8 ff. 147 ff.
6. *utsedha jīvinah saṅgha vrātāh*, V. 3. 113.
7. Agrawala, *India as known to Pāṇini*, pp. 439-42; Kane, P. V., *HDS*, II. pt. I, pp. 385-87; Bhandarkar, D. R., *IA*, 40, pp. 7-37.
8. Srinivas, M. N., *Caste in Modern India and other Essays*, pp. 42-62 and 'Sanskritization and Westernization', *Far Eastern Quarterly*, Vol. XIV, No. 4, 1956, pp. 481-96. The term has been criticised by Staal, J. F., 'Sanskrit and Sanskritization', *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XXII, No. 3, 1963, pp. 261-75.
9. With political power a low ranking man or foreigner could secure acceptance as Kṣatriya, e. g. in the *Mahābhārata*, Karṇa, a son of the sūta was anointed as the king of Aṅga and made equal to other Kṣatriya kings. cf. Shivaji's coronation as a Kṣatriya, Karve, I., *Hindu Society : An Interpretation*, pp. 43 ff. "It was among the dominant castes, prepared to use force and obliged to procure them-

selves a following, that mobility was very probably at its greatest in the traditional system. Dominance over a large territory could even open the gate to the Ksatriya varṇa", Dumont, Louis, *Homo Hierarchicus*, p. 245. For the concept of 'dominant caste', the criteria of dominance and the homology between the function of dominance and the function of royalty, see Srinivasa, M. N., 'The Dominant Caste in Rampura', *American Anthropologist*, LXI, 1959, pp. 1-16; Mayer, A. C., 'The Dominant Caste in a Region of Central India', *South Western Journal of Anthropology*, XIV, 1958, pp. 407-27; Cohn, Bernard, 'Law and change (Some Notes on) in Northern India', *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, 1959, pp. 79-93 and Hitchcock, J. T., 'Leadership in a North Indian Village; Two Case Studies' in *Leadership and Political Institutions*, ed. Park, Richard L. and Irene Tinker, pp. 395-414.

10. *Manu.*, X. 79 *Śāstrāstravṛttvāṁ kṣatrasya vaṇīkpaśu kṣīrviśah ājīvanārthaṁ dharmastu dānam adhyayanam Yajih.*

11. *Manu.*, I. 87. *mukhavāhūrūpajjānām prīthakkarmānya kalpayat*, X. 79.

12. *Rakṣaṇaṁ, prajānām paripālanaṁ etc.*, *Manu.*, I. 89. X. 80; *Yāj.*, I. 119.

13. *Ait. Br.*, VII. 29, HOS, XXV, p. 334.

14. *Vedic Index*, II, pp. 255-56.

15. Drekmier, *Kingship and Community in Ancient India*, p. 84; cf. *Mahāvastu*, I. 338-48; Ghoshal, U. N., *A History of Indian Political Ideas* pp. 62-63, 259-60, 337-38.

16. *Chāndogyaupaniṣad*, VII. 1. 2; Pant, A. D., *A Critical Study of the Arthaśāstra Tradition in Ancient Political Thought* (unpublished thesis, Allahabad University), pp. 100-09.

17. *Manu.*, II. 31-42, 155, V. 99, VIII. 113; *Artha*, 3. 6. 1. etc.

18. *Artha.*, 10. 3. 30, Kangle's translation; cf. *Milinda*, p. 331; *Manu.*, V. 98, VII. 89; *Yāj.*, I. 324; *Mbh.*, II. 22. 18; Kane, *HDS*, II, pt. I, p. 211.

19. *Agni Purāṇa*, CCXX, 1 ; *Matsya Purāṇa*, 215.8.10.
20. *Artha.*, 9. 2. 21-24. .
21. *Mitrabala*, *aṭavibala*, *maulabala*, *bhṛtyabala* and *diviṣadbala*. *Dviṣadbala* consisted of soldiers who had deserted from the enemy, the same as *amitrabala* of Kauṭilya, *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, 17-24 ; Kane, *HDS*, III, pp. 202-04.
22. *Artha.*, 6. 1. 11, Kangle's translation.
23. Kangle, *op. cit.*, III, p. 245.
24. *Milinda*. p. 178 ; the expression *lekha-muddā* has been variously rendered—*muddā* has been translated by Rhys Davids as the law of property (*SBE*, XXXV, p. 247). R. K. Mookerji prefers to translate it as a knowledge of coins and currency (Majumdar, R. C., ed., *AIU*, p. 586, n. 2), Ghoshal takes the words *lekha-muddā* as writing and accounts (Sastri, K. A. N., ed., *Comp HI*, p. 463).
25. *Artha.*, 1. 5. 7-14 ; cf. Mookerji, R. K., *Chandra Gupta Maurya and His Times*, pp. 54-55.
26. *Milinda.*, p. 3 ; *SBE*. XXXV, p. 6 has four Vedas but as Śruti is already mentioned, the reading Dhanurveda should perhaps be preferred, see *Milindapañha*, ed., Vadekar, R. D., p. 4. For educational attainments of kings also see Sircar, *Sel. Ins.*, p. 42 ff ; Barua, B. M., *Old Brahmi Inscriptions*, p. 241 ff, Fleet, *CII*, III, p. 6 ff.
27. *Manu.*, Chap. II.
28. 'The goal set before the ruler is that of expansion', Kangle, *op. cit.*, III, p. 255 ; *Artha.*, Bks. 9, 10, 12 are devoted to planning and execution of war ; cf. *Manu*, VII. 101-03, X. 119.
29. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 211 ; McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described in Classical Literature*, p. 53.
30. Kosambi, D. D., 'Ancient Kośala and Magadha'. *JBBRAS*, XXVII, 1951, p. 198.
31. *Artha.*, 2. 4. 9.
32. Breloer, B., *Staatsverwaltung in alten Indien*. p. 354 referred to by Walter Ruben, 'Some Problems of the Ancient

Indian Republics', in *Kunwar Mohammad Ashraf*, ed., by Horst Kruger, :p. 21. Also see *Artha*. Bk. 2. Chaps. 3, 30-33.

33. Index, *Lüders List*.

34. The Vaiśyās did have a considerable influence on administration, but this influence generally seems to have been that of the money power, exerted by the mercantile community from outside, see *infra*. Chap. IV, pp. 146-48.

35. *Manu.*, IX. 322 ; cf. *Artha.*, 1. 9. 11.

36. Kālidāsa uses the terms *mantri*, *amātya*, and *saciva* as synonyms, Upadhyaya, B. S., *India in Kālidāsa*, p. 127. In the *Artha*. the term *amātya* has been used generally for executive heads and the term *mantri* for counsellors. The *amātya* was sometimes counted as the second *prakṛiti*, next in importance to the king, *Artha.*, 6. 1. 1 ; *Manu.*, IX. 294. However, on this point also see Kangle, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 132-34 and Kane, *HDS*, III, pp. 104-10.

37. Basak, R., 'Ministers in Ancient India', *IHQ*, I, no. 3, 1925, p. 523.

38. Maintenance of secrecy of counsel has been repeatedly emphasised, *Manu.*, VII. 146 ff ; Gonda, however, suggested that originally a *mantri* was one who gave advice regarding mystical formulae and charms and incantations, 'Ancient Indian Kingship from Religious Point of view', *Numen*, IV, 1956, pp. 156-57.

39. *Manu.*, VII. 54, 60.

40. Sinha, H. N., *Sovereignty in Ancient India*, pp. 246-47.

41. Sharma, R. S., *Aspects of political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India.* p. 166.

42. *Yāj.*, I. 311 ; *Manu.*, VII, 54, 60-62 ; Mehta, R., *Pre-Buddhist India*, p. 136.

43. *Śāntiparvan*, 86. 26-27 ; cf. *Manu.*, VII. 63.

44. Ruben, W., 'Some Problems of Ancient Indian Republics', *Kunwar Mohammad Ashraf*, ed., Horst Kruger, pp. 21-23.

45. Kangle, *op. cit.*, II, p. 69 ; Kangle, *op. cit.*, III, p. 171.

46. Ruben, *Mohammad Ashraf* etc., p. 26 ff.

47. *Manu.*, XI. 14.

48. *Artha.*, 2. 1. 7.

49. *Manu.*, VII. 114-15.

50. That civil and military functions were often combined by one officer is illustrated best by the class of officials called *daṇḍanāyaka* and *mahādaṇḍanāyaka*, Puri. B. N., *History of Indian Administration*, pp. 101-02, 126 ff. The army often contained feudal princes, Majumdar, B. K., *Military system of Ancient India*, p. 84. Sometimes *daṇḍanāyaka* could keep a certain amount of royal levy and he was put in charge of the administration of a large number of villages, *EI*, XIII, p. 36 ; *EI*, XV, p. 93.

51. i. e. as much land as could be cultivated with twelve oxen, see Kullūka on *Manu.*, VII. 119.

52. The custom of making land grants to officers as a mode of payment is referred to by Hiuen Tsang and Bāṇa and supported by a number of epigraphic references from the 9th century onwards, Watters, I, p. 176 ; *Harsacarita*, ed., J. Vidyasagar, p. 93 ; Gopal, Lallanji, *Economic Life of Northern India*, p. 4. The custom became more widespread rather late, but was not unknown in the earlier period, Sharma, R. S., *Indian Feudalism*, pp. 7-9.

53. I. 211-12. The *Śukranīti*, however, is thought by some to be a very late text, *BSOAS*, 1962, pt. 3rd, pp. 524-31.

54. *Mbh.* 2. 5. 54. Evidences regarding the amenities given to state employees have been compiled by Kane. *HDS*, III, pp. 150-52.

55. *Kambojasurāṣṭra kṣatriyaśrenyādayo vārttāśastro-pajīvinah*, *Artha.*, 11. 1. 4. Jayaswal (*Hindu Polity*, pt. I, p. 62) takes the word *Kṣatriya* here as a proper noun and not as a *varṇa* name. But his interpretation has been rejected by Kangle, *op. cit.*, II. p. 526, n 4. Some *Kṣatriyas* would not mind tilling land personally, Kosambi, D. D., *The Culture and Civilization of India*, p. 108. A few of the *Kṣatriyas* continued to be attracted to trade and adopted it as their hereditary occupation even during later periods, Sharma, B. N., *Social Life in Northern India*,

p. 51; cf. Blunt, E. H., *The Caste System of Northern India*, p. 45.

56. Ruben, *Mohammad Ashraf*, ed. Kruger, pp. 5-29; cf., Bongard-Levin, G. M., *Studies in Ancient India and Central Asia*, pp. 74-76, 151-160.

57. *Dīghanikāya*, I. 90 91.

58. *Milinda.*, p. 202; Rhys Davids, *SBE*, XXXV, p. 287.

59. *Mbh.*, I. 73. 9-11; Spellman, *Political Theory of Ancient India*, pp. 76-77; cf., Law, N. N., *Aspects of Ancient Indian Polity*, p. 29. On the other hand, how a sensitive Brāhmaṇa felt about the royal pride and arrogance has found voice in Talagundi inscription (verse 11-12) which describes the chagrin of Mayūraśarman in the following words: 'Alas in the age of Kali Brāhmaṇhood is helpless against the Kṣatra; for what can be more pitiful than this, that even after I have given full satisfaction to my *gurus* and studied my *śākhā* with great effort, the realisation of my spiritual aim should depend on the king', *EI*, VIII, pp. 24-36; Sircar, D. C., *Sel. Ins.*, p. 450 ff.

60. The interpretation and the meaning of the terms *saṅgha* and *gaṇa* and the type of government and constitution of these states have been a subject of controversy. For further details see Bhandarkar, D. R., *Carmichael Lectures*, 1918, pp. 142 ff; Jayaswal, K. P., *Hindu Polity*, pp. 352 sq.; Majumdar, R. C., *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, pp. 221 sq., Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India*, Chap. VI; Ghoshal, *Studies in Indian History and Culture*, pp. 360-405; Sharma, J.P., *Republic in Ancient India*.

61. *Mbh.*, XII. 14-17; Ruben *Mohammad Ashraf*, ed. Kruger, p. 14.

62. Drekmeier, *op. cit.*, pp. 109 ff.

63. Rhys Davids, *The Questions of King Milinda.*, *SBE*, XXXV, IV. 2. 8. The Pali text has the reading *cattāra mahāmatta*, Trenckner, *Milinda*, p. 145 which has been translated by Rhys Davids as 'four chief ministers'. The rendering of *Mahāmatta* as 'officer' appears better.

64. *Manu.*, VIII. 88.

65. *Artha.*, 3. 11. 34-37.
66. *Manu.*, VIII. 123-24; *Artha.*, 3. 11. 38.
67. *Artha.*, 3. 18. 7; Kangle, *op. cit.*, II, p. 287, n. 7.
Shamasastri has not elaborated on this point. The manner of his translation suggests that his interpretation of the rule is not far different from that of Kangle.
68. *Manu.*, VIII. 270.
69. *Manu.*, VIII. 277.
70. Dumont, Louis. *Homo Hierarchicus*, Chap. 5, especially pp. 152-53, 172.
71. *Artha.*, 3. 6. 19.
72. For details regarding the law of adultery see *infra*, Chap. IV, especially the chart, p. 150 ff.
73. *Manu.*, VIII. 365-66, *Yāj.*, II. 286.
74. *Manu.*, VIII. 337-38; cf *Gaut.*, XII., 15-17.
75. It has been argued by a few scholars, e. g. Dumont (*Homo Hierarchicus*), that in India there was a complete separation between power and social status. Social status was determined by one's ritual position. This is why lower castes even after obtaining political power tried also to acquire a higher caste. In other words political power did not automatically confer social status in India. The shrewd observation contains an element of truth but does not appear to be fully correct. If ritual position alone, and not power, gave status rank in India then the lower castes after obtaining political power should have endeavoured to attain Brāhmaṇa *varṇa* and not Kṣatriyahood, Beteille, *Castes : Old and new*, pp. 4, 21 ff. Blunt is of the opinion that originally Kṣatriyas were at the head of the society and Brāhmaṇas were merely priests. That among the Brahmanical *gotras* ten were founded by the Kṣatriyas who became Brāhmaṇas proves, according to Blunt, the pride taken by such Brāhmaṇas in their original Kṣatriya descent, Blunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 35, 43.
76. *Apas*, II. 2. 4. 25-28; *Manu.*, II. 241-42.
77. Kosambi, *Culture and Civilization of Ancient India*, pp. 120-21.

78. Instances of Khāravēla, Rudradāman, Samudragupta, etc., have been mentioned above. Kosambi writes : "rich and powerful foreigners could naturalise themselves through Sanskrit as Indians of the nobility.... The most highly Sanskritised epigraphs in the Buddhist caves at Nāsik come from Śāka donors of foreign descent, while the indigenous Sātavāhana rulers still kept to the simpler Prākṛit." Kosambi, *Culture and Civilization of Ancient India*, p. 167.

79. The statement in *Tait. Sam.*, II. 5. 4. 4, "the prosperous are the three indeed, viz., the learned Brāhmaṇa, the village headman and the warrior (rājanya)" holds good for all periods of ancient Indian history.

80. *Jat.*, IV. 169 ; *Manu.*, VIII. 411.

CHAPTER IV

1. *Tait. Sam.*, (VII. 1. 1. 4-5) connecting the Vaiśyas with the *Viśvedevāh* says that they were more numerous than other people.

2. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, II, pp. 305-7, specially p. 306, note. 9.

3. According to D. D. Kosambi the *Paṇis* were non-Aryans, perhaps the descendants of the Harappan people, *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India*, p. 80 ; Kosambi, D. D., *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, pp. 72, 91-92. That the *Viś* often challenged the superiority of the Kṣatriyas too is clear from numerous passages in the *Brāhmaṇas* and later *Saṃhitās* which refer to the strife between the *Viś* and the *Kṣatra*, *Tait. Sam.*, II. 2. 11. 2 ; *Mait. Sam.* II. 1. 9 ; III. 3. 10 ; *Kath. Sam.*, XXIX. 8. etc.

4. *Ait. Br.*, VII. 29. 3 ; *Tait. Sam.* VII. 1. 1. 4-5.

5. *Rg.*, X. 84. 4 ; *Atharva*, IV. 34. 1. *viśam viśam yudhaye...*, *viśam viśam* according to śāyaṇa means all subjects.

6. Sharma, *Śūdras*, pp. 27-28.

7. Ghoshal U. N., *Hindu Public life*, I, pp. 73-80 ; Dutt,

N. K., *Origin and Growth of Caste in India*, pp. 86-96 ; Ghurye, *Caste, Class and Occupation*, pp. 45-58 ; 'Brāhmaṇa is all gods', *Tait. Br.*, I. 2. 6. 7. In a dispute between the Brāhmaṇa and non-Brāhmaṇa, the king is to support the Brāhmaṇa, *Tait. Sain.*, II. 5. 12 ; 'Nothing is superior to Kṣatra', *Br. Up.*, I. 4.

8. The word Vaiśya used for the first time in the *puruṣasūkta* came to be used more frequently from the *Atharva-veda* onwards, though the older word *Viś* also continued: Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, II, pp. 307, 333.

9. *Tait. sain.*, VII. 1. 1. 4. 5 ; *Ait. Br.* I. 28.

10. The newly consecrated king is called on the ascend the four quarters of the sky and he is asked to be protected in the east by the Brāhmaṇa, in the south by the Kṣatra, in the west by the Viś and in the north by *phala*, *varcas* and *puṣṭam*, *Vāj. Sain.*, X. 10-13 ; *Tait. Sain.*, I. 8. 13 ; *Mait. Sain.*, II. 6. 10 ; *Kath. Sain.*, XV. 7. Jayaswal (*Hindu Polity*, II, p. 29, n. 2.) and Sharma (*Śūdras*, p. 53) are inclined to take *phala* and *puṣṭam* as signifying Śūdras. The word *phala* means result and may mean the result, i. e., the spiritual merits, obtained from sacrifices performed by Brāhmaṇas ; *varcas* means lustre, a quality connected with Kṣatriyas (*ojas* is the quality attributed to the Kṣatriya in *Kath. Sain.*, XXXVII. 1) ; and *puṣṭam* (nourishment) is an attribute of the Vaiśyas. So the three, the *phala*, *varcas* and *puṣṭam* may stand for the special qualities of the three higher *varṇas*. "Also see Ghoshal, U. N., *Historiography and other Essays*, p. 264.

11. *Mait. Sain.*, IV. 4. 6 ; *Varāha Śrauta Sūtra*, III 3. 3. 24 ; *Ap. Sr. Sut.*, XVII. 19. 2-3 ; Sharma, *Śūdras*, pp. 51-52. n. 1.

12. *Vāj. Sain.*, X. 29 ; *Śat. Br.*, V. 4. 4. 19-23 ; *Kat. Sr. Sut.*, IV. 7. VII. 11-20.

13. *Śat. Br.*, XIII. 2. 9. 8 ; *Tait. Br.*, III. 9. 7. 3 ; *Vāj. Sain.*, XXIII. 30-31. The word used is not Vaiśya but 'arya' which according to commentators means Vaiśya, e. g., Mahidhara and Uvaṭa on *Vāj. Sain.*, XXIII. 30. Eggeling

takes the word 'arya' as Vaiśya, see: *Śat. Br.*, tr. *SBE*, XLIV, p. 326.

14. *Tait. Br.*, I. 1. 4. 8; *Ap. Sr. Sut.*, V. 3. 19, V. 11. 7; *Kat. Sr. Sut.*, I. 9, IV. 179-81; *Baudh. Gr. Sut.*, II. 5. 6. Similarly the Niṣāda chief (*niṣāda sthapati*) also had the right to sacrifice—though this related to the sacrifice to Lord Rūdra Paśupati, originally a non-aryan deity, *Ap. Sr. Sut.*, IX. 14. 11-12. This may, however, mean that the Niṣādas, a non-Aryan tribe, retained their old religious beliefs. Also see *infra* chap. VI, pp. 212-13.

15. Pande, G. C., *op. cit.*, p. 314; cf. Bandyopadhyaya, N. C., *Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India*, I, pp. 240 ff, 254 ff, 285 ff; *CHI*, I, 205 ff.

16. *JBBRAS*, 1951, pp. 192-93; Bose, A. N., *Social and Rural Economy of Northern India*, II, pp. 481-82; Buddha Prakash, *Studies in Indian History and Civilization*, pp. 176-88.

17. *Vinaya*, I, p. 274; *Uvāsagadasāo*, p. 184; *gahapati-kassa tantuvāyehi*, *Vinaya*, III. 258-59; *Ang. Nik.*, V, p. 117; *Vinaya*, I. p. 240-244.

18. *Vinaya*, III, p. 73.

19. *Paresam bhatimkatvā kicchena jīvati*, *Jāt.*, I. 475, II. 139, III. 325 etc.; Bose, A. N., *SRENI*, II, p. 202 ff.

20. *Majj. Nik.*, pp. 197-99.

21. *Ang. Nik.*, III. 363.

22. *Gaut.*, X. 60, *Śilpavṛttiśca*; *Gaut.*, X. 42.

22a. *Gaut.* XXII. 14-16; *Apas.* I. 9. 24. 1-4; *Baudh.* I. 10. 19. 1-2; *Vas.* XX. 31-33.

23. "For killing a female of the Brāhmaṇa caste who is an Ātreya, and a Kṣatriya or a Vaiśya engaged in a sacrifice (the same penance must be performed as for killing a learned Brāhmaṇa)", [*Vas.*, XX. 34, *SBE*, XIV, p. 107.

24. *Vas.* I. 24-25; a Vaiśya, like a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya, was of course allowed to take a Śūdra wife for 'pleasure'. (*Vas.*, XVIII. 18), but a son born of that wife would not get the *varṇa* of the father (*Baudh.*, I. 17. 6) whereas the son of a Brāhmaṇa by a Kṣatriya female or the

son of a Kṣatriya by a Vaiśya female would retain the *varṇa* of their respective fathers, *Baudh.*, I. 17. 3-5.

25. *Baudh.*, I. 20. 6-13.

26. Ghurye, *Caste, Class and Occupation*. p. 62; *Vas.*, XVII. 47-50.

27. Sharma, *Śūdras*, p. 1-6.

28. *Vas.*, XXVI. 16.

29. *Paśūnāi: rakṣaṇāḥ dānam: jyādhyaṇaṁeva ca vaṇikpatham kuśīdam ca vaiśyasya kṛsimeva ca. Manu.*, I. 90; *Vāpijyāṇ kāravedvaiśyaḥ kuśīdam kṛsimeva ca paśūnāṁ rakṣaṇāḥ caiva dāsyam śūdrām dvijanmanāṁ. Manu.*; VIII. 410; *Śāstrāstravṛttirāḥ kṣatrasya Vaṇikpaśukṛṣirviśah, Manu.*, X. 79.

30. *Manu.*, VIII. 418. According to Sharma this passage is of particular importance as it reflects a period of socio-economic crisis. *Śūdras*, pp. 176-77.

31. *Manu.*, IX. 329-332; *Manu.*, X. 83-94; cf; *Yāj.*, III. 35-40; *Vas.*, II. 24-39.

32. Exact connotation of the term *vārttā* gave rise to some amount of controversy among the commentators of *Manu* as it has among the modern scholars. According to Nandācārya *vārttā* means trade; Medhātithi accepts the definition as given in *Brhaspati* (*yathā Bārhaspatye vārttā samupadiṣṭā*, commentary on *Manu*. IX. 326): according to Kullūka, (on *Manu.*, X. 80), *vārttā* means trade and rearing cattle; according to Govindarāja *vārttā* means trade, rearing cattle and agriculture. Kangle accepts the word in the sense Govindarāja had done, *Kautiliya Arthaśāstra*, III, p. 166. Buhler, however, is inclined to interpret the word as trade, *SBE*. XXV, p. 420, n. 80. Buhler's interpretation derives some strength from the fact that in *Manu.*, IX. 326, *vārttā* and cattle rearing seem to have been distinguished since *paśurakṣaṇa* has been mentioned separately along with *vārttā*. However, see Kullūka's commentary on the verse.

33. The occupational change of the Vaiśyas from agriculture to trade has been ascribed to the influence of

Buddhism—agriculture involves injury to living beings, while trade does not, Sharmā, Brijnarain, *Social Life in Northern India*, pp. 50-51. It, however, appears more likely that trade was adopted because of economic returns and not due to the influence of Buddhism and Jainism. It is quite likely that these religions praised trade more than agriculture to secure the patronage of wealthy merchants.

33a. *Milinda.*, p. 178.

34. Ghoshal, U. N., *A History of Indian Public Life*, II, pp. 92 ff.

35. *Sūtrakāravah, Artha*, 2. 4. 13. For working of the textile industry see *Artha*, 2. 23.

36. For artisans doing the work of setting in gold, bead-making, plating, gilding, etc., *Artha.*, 2. 13. 83; for greater details regarding the goldsmithy see *Artha.*, sections 13, 14, bk. 2.

37. *Mahākārūs* (major artisans) and *kṣudrakārūs* (minor artisans) are mentioned in *Artha.*, 5. 2. 20-21; *Kārūśāsitarah, Artha.*, 4. 1. 2; Kangle, *op. cit.*, II, p. 294, n. 2 and III, p. 185.

38. *Samṅhabhṛta, Artha.*, 3. 14. 12-17.

38a. *Yāj.*, II. 249.

39. *Artha.*, 3. 13. 27-30.

40. *Artha.*, 3. 14. 4. “‘If the (employer) does not give work when the labourer has presented himself the work shall be considered as done’ says teachers” (*‘upasthitamakārayatah kṛtameva vidyāt’ ityācāryāh*). *Artha.*, 3. 14. 6. This indicates the awareness of at least some thinkers of the unjust methods adopted by some employers.

41. *Artha*, 4. 2. 18.

42. Kangle, *op. cit.*, III, p. 171.

43. ‘For traders, too, who by conspiring together hold back wares or sell them at a higher price the fine is one thousand *pañas*’ (*vaidehakānām vā sambhūya paṇyamavarūndhatām anargheṇa vikṛīṇatām krīṇatām vā sahasraṇ danḍah*), *Artha.*, 4. 2. 19; cf. *Yāj.*, II. 249-50. Also see

Artha., 4. 2. 31; Ghoshal, *A History of Indian Public Life*, II, p. 104.

44. *Manu.*, VIII. 402; cf. *Mitāksarā* on *Yāj.*, II. 251.

45. *Gaut.*, X. 24; *Manu.*, VII. 130. *Artha.*, 5. 2. 2, 14 allows a levy to the tune of 1/4th or 1/3rd on agricultural produce, but these seem to have been meant only for emergency periods, See Kangle, *op. cit.*, II, p. 343, n. 1.

46. *Manu.*, VIII. 398; *Gaut.*, X. 26, 35. *Baudh.*, I. 10. 14-15, allowed the king to take from goods imported by sea a duty of 10 *paṇas* in 100, for other commodities duties varied according to the intrinsic worth of the ware. *Viṣṇu*, III. 29-30, asked the king to levy a duty of 1/10th on the indigenous merchandise and 1/20th on foreign goods.

46a. *Artha.*, 4. 2; *Manu.*, VIII. 400-05, IX. 286-87.

47. *Daṇḍaviṣṭikarābhādhaiḥ rakṣedupahatām kṛṣīm.*, *Artha.*, 2. 1. 37. *Vallabhahaiḥ kārmikah stenah antapālaiśca pīḍitah*, *Artha.*, 2. 1. 38.

48. *Suvarṇarajatavajramāṇimuktāpravālāśvahastipanyāḥ pañcāśatkarāḥ, sūtravastratāmraṇittakāṃsagandha-bhaṣajyaśidhupaṇyāścatvāriṃśatkarāḥ, dhānyarasaloḥapanyāḥ śakāṭavyavahāriṇaśca triṃśatkarāḥ, kācavyavahārino mahākāravaśca viṃśatkarāḥ, kṣudrakāravo bandhakīpoṣakāśca daśakarāḥ, kāṣṭhaveṇu pāsānamrdbhāṇḍapakvānnaharitaḥ anyāḥ pañcakarāḥ, Kuśilavē rūpājīvāśca vetanāmr̥dhaḍadyuh*, *Artha.*, 5. 2. 17-23. Kangle translates *pañcāśatkarāḥ*, *catvāriṃśatkarāḥ*, etc., as a tax of fifty, forty and so on, Kangle, *op. cit.*, II, p. 345, n. 17. This translation does not appear to be justified. The scale of taxation in the above passage seems to be a graduated scale beginning with 2% for dealers in gold, etc., and rising to 50% for the actors and prostitutes. If on the other hand Kangle's translation is accepted it would indicate a scale of taxation descending from 50 to 5 and then rising abruptly for actors and prostitutes to 50%. The explanation in *Bhāṣavyākhyāna*, *Śrīmūla*, etc., that *pañcāśatkarāḥ*, *catvāriṃśatkarāḥ*, etc., mean 1/50th, 1/40th, and so on, appears more plausible. If this interpretation is accepted as correct, we might

conclude that the whole scheme of taxation was regressive and that the greater burden fell on the small traders and peasants.

49. Making charitable endowments at holy places have been an age old custom with our merchant community and not a modern fashion. That such endowments during our period were made more in favour of Buddhist and Jain orders than in favour of Brahmanical religious establishments raises an interesting question. Did some sections of traders turn to Buddhism and Jainism on account of the depreciating attitude of the *Smritis* to their professions, e. g., to the perfumers, the oilmakers, the dealers in iron and weapon, etc., who made large donations to non-Brahmanical monasteries ?

50. Lüders *List*, nos. 1000, 1024, 1073, 1158, 1163, 1166, 1167.

51. *Ibid.*, nos. 1000, 1024, 1072.

52. *Ibid.*, 1158.

53. Göebl, Robert, 'Roman Patterns for Kushana Coins', *JNSI*, XXII (1960), pp. 78-79.

53a. Buddha Prakash, *Aspects of Indian History and Civilization*, p. 3.

54. Buddha Prakash, *Aspects of Indian History and Civilization* pp. 3-5 ; Maity, S. K., *Economic Life*, pp. 137-39 ; Sharma, R. S., *Indian Feudalism*, pp. 65-68 ; Satyanarayana, K., *A Study of the History and Culture of the Andhras*, pp. 187-88, 259-60.

55. Maity, *Economic Life*, pp. 188-90. In Gupta inscriptions Gupta Kings are compared with Dhanada, Varūṇa, Indra, Antaka, etc., Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, p. 259. Among these various deities the name of the god of wealth is mentioned first ; this seems interesting. Also see Wheatley, P., *The Golden Khersonese*, p. 188.

56. Horner, I. B., *Book of the Discipline*, II, p. 47.

57. Wagle, N., *Society at the Time of the Buddha*, pp. 151-52.

58. Horner, *Book of the Discipline*, II. p. 67, *Vinaya*, III, p. 222.
59. *Vinaya*, I. p. 227; *Mahāparinibhāna Sutta*, V. 24; Fick, *op. cit.*, pp. 253-63; Wagle, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-66, 151-56.
60. *Lüders List*, nos. 193, 201, 202, 449, 450, 725, 1120, 1171, 1206, 1209, 1220, 1221, 1222, 1244, 1252, 1254, 1255, 1260, 1274, 1277.
61. *Ibid.*, nos. 1157, 1302.
62. Buhler, *ASWI*, V, p. 79, no. 14.
63. Senart, *EI*, VIII, p. 75, no. 6.
64. *Vaniya*, *Lüders List*, no. 1281; *Śreṣṭhī*, *Ibid.*, no. 1075.
65. *Mahāvastu*, tr. Jones, III, p. 110.
66. For the shortcomings of the rendering of *gahapati* as householder, Rhys Davids, *SBE*, XI, p. 257, n. 2.
67. See *Lüders List*, index; Senart, *EI*, VII, pp. 52 f. no. 5; *Lüders List*, no. 1091.
68. *Gṛhasthānām vā pravrajitānām vā, gṛhasthān pravrajitāśca, gṛhasthā ye pravrajitāśca ye, Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, ed. Dutt. Nalinaksha, Calcutta, 1953, pp. 150, 154, 190.
69. *Mahājanapadesu ca dhanīkah syādāyogaprayogakṛtī vāṇijya prabhutaśca hiraṇyakotīśatasahasrairvyavahāraṁ kurvan, Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, ed. Dutt. pp. 74-75. For a graphic description of the wealth and occupation of the *gṛhapati* and what consisted of the *grihapati's* business (*gṛhapatikṛtyaṁ*) see *Ibid.* pp. 54 ff. 74 ff and kern's translation of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, *SBE*. Vol. XXI, pp. 72 ff, 99 ff; also *infra* pp. 147-48.
70. *Milinda*, p. 17.
71. *Lüders List*, no. 1153; the *gahapati* was the leader of the *dharmanigama* of Vīrasena. Also see Thapar, R., *Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*, pp. 63-64.
- 71a. *Jāt.*, V. 511; Horner, *Book of Discipline*, II, p. 63; Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, p. 126; Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Kindred Sayings*, I, p. 233; Woodward, *Gradual*

Sayings, I, pp. 171, 216 ; Bose, *SRENI*, I, p. 196 ; Wagle, *op. cit.*, p. 20 ff.

71b. *Jāt.*, VI. 330 f, III. 513, IV. 262, 449, V. 221, VI. 5, II. 209 ; *Milinda.*, p. 121.

72. Motichandra, *Sārthavāha*, p. 163. The Lexicons and medieval digests give variant meanings of the term. *Amarakośa* defines *nigama* as a city, *Amarakośa*, ed., Haradatta Sharma, p. 74 ; *Mānsāra* and *Mayamata* define *nigama* as a city full of *Karmmakāras*, Roy, U. N., *City and City Life in Ancient India*, p. 22. Commenting on *Yasastilakacampū* of Somadeva enumerating different types of places, *Purasthānīya-droṇamukha karvaṭikasaṁgraha nigamagrāma viśvambharā*, Śrīdeva says that *nigama* is one hundred thousand villages, *nigamah lakṣagrāmah*.

73. Negi, J. S., *Some Indological Studies*, p. 92 ff.

74. Motichandra, *Kāsi Kā Itihāsa*, pp. 91-93.

75. Senart, *EI*, VIII, pp. 82-83 ; *Lüders List*, no. 705 ; Banerji, R. D., *Age of the Imperial Guptas*, p. 84.

75a. The expression *nigama*, however, in some rare cases still continued to be used for some kind of settlements, Junagarh Inscription of Rudradāman, Sircar, D. C., *Sel Ins*, p. 171 ; *Anga.*, p. 200.

75b. In the lexicons *nigama* also has been used in the sense of *samuha* or association of merchants, *Samavāyaṅga-sūtra* cited in *Pāṇi-Sadda Mahannavo*, p. 393 ; cf., *Ācāraṅga-sūtra*, quoted in *Abhidhānī-Rājendra*, s.v. *nigama*.

76. Buddha Prakash, *Aspects of Indīan History and Civilization*, p. 20 ; cf., Motichandra, *Sārthavāha*, p. 163. Thapliyal, K. K., interprets both *śrenī* and *nigama* as guilds—*śrenī* consisted of members practising same profession or trade while *nigama* included people following diverse trades, *JNSI*, XXX, pp. 133 ff. Sircar, D. C., on the other hand thinks that *nigama* was the executive body of a guild, *Studies in the Political and Administrative Systems in Ancient and Medieval India*, pp. 259 ff. These suggestions can only be taken as tentative.

77. *Lüders List*, nos. 998, 1000, 1024, etc.

78. Chakravarti, N. P., *EI.*, XXXI, pp. 167 ff, 182.
79. *Setṭhim nissāya vasantassa tunnakārassa tunnakam-mena jīvissāma*, *Jat.*, IV. 38.
80. Bose, A. N., *op. cit.*, II, p. 17.
81. *Vinaya*, I., p. 147.
82. Mrs. Rhys Davids, *CHI*, I., p. 185 ; Bose, A. N., *op. cit.*, II, p. 13.
83. Strenbach, L., *Juridical Studies in Ancient Indian Law*, pt. I, pp. 72 ff.
84. Jain, J. C., *Life in Ancient India as Depicted in the Jain Canons*, p. 110.
- 84a. Sircar, D. C., *Glossary*, p. 317.
85. Motichandra, *Sārthavāha*, p. 65 ; Agrawala, V. S., Introduction to *Sārthavāha* by Motichandra, p. 6.
86. *Ahṃ sārthasya neṭā vai sārthavāhah śucismite*, *Mbh.* 3. 61. 122 ; Motichandra, *Sārthavāha*, p. 65. The leader of the caravan was also called *sārthavāha jeṭṭhaka*, *EI*, XXIX, p. 395. As the leader of the caravan was called *Sārthavāha jeṭṭhaka*, it appears that every caravan trader, and not the leader alone, was called *sārthavāha*. This, however, is contradicted by the *Mahābhārata* verse cited above.
87. Jain, J. C., *op. cit.*, p. 110.
- 87a. *Mbh.* 3. 61. 124 ; 3. 62. 3.
88. *Madhyadeśād vaṇijo dakṣiṇāpatham gatha*, *Avadānaśūtaka*, LXXXVII, p. 103 ; *phalavāṇiya*, *mūlavāṇiya*, etc., *Aṅga.*, chap. XXVIII ; Puri, B. N., *India Under the Kushanas*, p. 107.
89. That the *gandhika* was not just a perfume maker but also a dealer in perfume is clear from the Amaravati Inscription, *Lüders List*, no. 1230, which describes a *gandhika* as *Vaniya*. In the *Artha.*, 2. 4. 9, we find reference to the selling of perfumes. Similarly in *Manu.*, X. 88, a Brāhmaṇa is allowed to adopt the profession of *Vaiśya* in time of distress, but is forbidden to sell perfumes. In both the *Arthaśāstra* and *Manusmṛiti* thus we find reference to the sale of perfumes.

90. See. Agrawala, V. S., Preface to *Aṅgavijjā*, p. 71, for the interpretation of the term *saṃjukāraka*.

91. *Lüders List*, no. 92a, 95, 986, 1177, 1333, 74, 993, 996, 1033, 1179, 1239, 1247, 1297, 1180, 37, 39, 68, 76, 1090, 1187, 1210, 1230.

92. *Lüders List*, no. 1292 and 30. Women taking up the hazardous life of caravan traders need not be dismissed away as impossible. Women did accompany *sārtha*, *Mbh.*, 3. 62, quoted by Agrawala, V. S., Introduction to *Sārthavāha* by Motichandra, p. 5. During this period women also took to ploughing *Yugapurāṇa*, 167, quoted by Sharma, R. S., *Śūdras*, p. 177.

92a. Kangle, *op. cit.*, III. pp. 146-48, 166 ; Sharma, R. S., *Śūdras*, pp. 179 ff.

93. *Kārukarma, Śilpa, Manu.*, X. 99, 100 ; cf. *Viṣṇu*, III. 14 ; *Manu.*, X. 116.

93a. Sharma, *Śūdras*, p. 178.

94. *Artha.*, 5. 2. 17-23.

95. *Karmaṇā Vaiśya rathakārah*, Kangle's reading, *op. cit.*, II, p. 248, n. 35. A Rathakāra is a Vaiśya because of his profession, *Artha.*, 3. 7. 35.

96. *Pannavanā*, I. 61 quoted by Sharma, R. S., *Śūdras*, p. 180.

97. *Manu.*, VIII. 88. 113 ; V. 99.

98. *Manu.*, VIII. 411 ; suitable job for the Vaiśya : employment as herdsman, explained Medhātithi.

99. *Dāsyam tu Kārayanllobhād brāhmaṇah saṃskṛtānd-vijān anicchatha prābhavatvādrājñā daṇḍyah śatāni ṣaṭ*. The verse, VIII. 412 only states that no twice-born man can be forced to work as slave if unwilling, but since the previous verse, *Manu.*, VIII. 411, speaks of the suitable employment to be given to the Kṣatriya and Vaisya in distress by wealthy Brāhmaṇas, it appears to have special reference to the Kṣatriya and Vaiśya in distress.

99a. Sharma, *Sūdras*, p. 178.

100. *Manu.*, X. 121-22. *dhaninnm vāpyupārādhy vaiśyam śūdro jijīviṣet*.

101. *Manu.*, XI. 12-13.
- 101a. *Manu.*, III. 112, VIII. 88, 113, 418.
102. See above p. 136, Cf. the office of the *sandhiyagrshika*, the minister for peace and war, held by a *śreṣṭhin* in a Kalachuri inscription of eleventh century A. D., *El.* XIX, pp. 78 ff.
- 102a. Also see Anjaneri Plates, second set, of Bhogaśakti of the 8th Century A. D., Mirashi, *CII, IV*, ins. no. 32, pp. 154 ff. Merchants were the chief representatives of the town of Samagiri Paṭṭana.
103. *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*. Chap. IV, Kern's translation, *SBE*, XXI, p. 101. The actual social status of the rich merchants and business magnates was higher than their *varṇa* status. Rai, Jaṁmal, *The Rural Urban Economy and Social Changes in Ancient India*, pp. 342-44, 378.
104. *Manu.*, II. 155.
- 104a. Pandey, R. B., *Hindu Samskāras*, pp. 42-43, 46.
- 104b. Dumont, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-100.
105. *Manu.*, XI. 12-14.
106. *Manu.*, XI. 67; *Yāj.*, III. 236.
- 106a. *Manu.*, XI. 127-31; *Yāj.*, III. 266-67.
107. Since defamation by a member of the equal *varṇa* the fine was 12 *paṇas*, *Manu.*, VIII. 269, we may surmise this.
108. See below. Chap. VI.
109. *Manu.*, III. 13. IX. 151; *Yāj.*, I. 56; *Mitāksarā* on *Yāj.*, II. 125.

CHAPTER V

1. If religion was the cohesive force of Hindu society the Śūdra having no place in the religious life should be counted as an outsider. Later, however, the Śūdra was granted permission to perform certain *samskāras* without Vedic *mantras*, Kane, *HDS*. II, pt. I, pp. 158-59, 198-99.

1a. *Manu.*, I. 91, VIII. 413-14, X. 128.

2. The growth of population among the barbarian tribes on the one hand and the increasing demand for labour in the developing areas with increasing wealth on

the other, created numerous lower or unclean services, Weber, Max., *The Religion of India*, p. 12. For the process of integration of tribes into castes see *Ibid.*, pp. 9 ff. Mandelbaum, D. G., *Society in India*, pp. 573 ff.

3. Some scholars, however, hold that *dāsa-dasyus* were demons and not human beings, Chattopadhyay, K., *Transactions XIIth International Congress of Orientalists*, Rome 1935, pp. 305 ff; Pande, G. C., *op. cit.*, p. 253.

3a. *Ait. Br.*, VII. 29; Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, II, pp. 255-56. Also see Sharma, Arvind, *JESHO*, XVIII, pt. III, 1975, pp. 300-17.

4. *Manu.*, I. 91, VIII, 410-18, X. 129, XI. 13. Manu's commentators indicate that the property in question (*Manu.*, VIII. 417) belonged to the Śūdra slave and could be disposed of only with the permission of the master. However, all the commentators do not agree to the interpretation of the verse, Buhler, *SBE*, XXV, pp. 326-27, n. 416, 417. Verse XI. 13 only gave the right to take a few articles from the Śūdras to complete a sacrifice.

5. *Śūdrāṃscātmopajīvinah*, *Manu.*, VII. 138.

6. Patil, D. R., *Cultural History from the Vāyu Purāṇa*, pp. 37-38.

7. *Śūdrakarṣakas*, *Artha.*, 2. 1. 2. The word *Śūdrakarṣaka* means Śūdra agriculturists and not Śūdras and cultivators, Kangle, *op. cit.*, II, p. 62, n. 2 and Sharma, R. S., *Śūdras*, p. 147, n. 2.

7a. *Artha.*, 2. 1. 8-18, 6. 1. 8, 7. 11. 21.

8. *Artha.*, 2. 1. 8-12, 2. 24. 16.

8a. Sharma, *Śūdras*, p. 157. However, according to some there is no evidence of forced labour in the *Arthaśāstra*, Rai, G. K., 'Forced labour in Ancient and Early Mediaeval India' forthcoming article in *IHR*, July 1976.

9. Conceding that craft and industry were often adopted by the Śūdras Saran thinks that 'skilled craftsmen were usually found among the Vaiśya', Saran, K. M., *Labour in Ancient India*, pp. 19-20. There is, however, no positive proof that skilled craftsmen were mostly Vaiśyas, see *supra*,

Chap. IV. Kangle and Sharma count all artisans as Śūdras, Kangle, *op. cit.*, III, p. 143 ; Sharma, *Śūdras*, pp. 153-57.

9a. *Manu.*, VII. 138, X. 120.

10. *Artha.*, 5. 2. 17-23.

11. Whereas Sāñchi Inscriptions contain a number of references to professional classes, the Bharhut Inscriptions refer to only a horseman (*aśvavāraka*) and a sculptor (*rūpakāraka*), Luders. *CII.*, II, pt. II, pp. 3, 22, 36.

12. *Manu.*, IV. 215 ; Cf. *Yāj.*, I. 163. The word *śastra-vikrayī* has been explained by Kullūka as a dealer in iron. *Lohikakārūka* has been rendered as metal worker by Luders. But the word could also probably be rendered as blacksmith. The *Smṛitis* considered practically all artisans as socially degraded, *Manu.*, IV. 210, 214-219 ; *Yāj.*, I. 161-65.

13. *Manu.*, IX. 157, 179, XI 42-43 ; *Yāj.* I. 121, 127, II. 133. There appears to be some difference in the attitude between Manu and Yājñavalkya regarding the right of accepting gift from the Śūdra by a Brāhmaṇa. While *Manu.* (XI. 13) allowed a Brāhmaṇa to appropriate even forcibly the property of the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras in order to complete a sacrifice, *Yāj.*, (I. 127) strongly depreciated the practice. Was this a conscious step towards liberalism ?

13a. *Jat.* III. 281 ; Sharma, *Śūdras*, p. 69 ff ; Singh, M. M., *Life in North Eastern India in Pre-Mauryan Times*, p. 248.

14. *Artha.* 5. 3. 12, 16, 10. 1. 1, 17. Even the pay of the *vardhakī* was twenty-four times lower than that of the highest category of state officials like the priest, the minister, etc., *Artha.*, 5. 3. 3. The salaries were monthly salary according to some authorities, Sharma, *Śūdras*, p. 155 ; Law, N. N., *IHQ.*, V, 1929, pp. 780 ff ; Kane, *HDS*, III, pp. 124 ff. But Kangle, *op. cit.* III, pp. 208-09 considers the pay to be annual ; Cf. Jain, P. C., *Labour in Ancient India*, pp. 234 ff.

15. *Yāj.*, II. 252, allows 5% profit to traders on indigenous goods.

16. *Aṅga.*, p. 160 ; cf. *Lüders List*, no. 1133 ; Fleet, *CII*, III, pp. 81-84.

17. *Aṅga.*, p. 159 ; cf. Puri, B. N., *India in the Time of Patañjali*, p. 117.

18. Sharma, *Śūdras*, p. 155. The lines in the *Arthaśāstra vetanādāne daśabandho daṇḍaḥ satpano vā apavyayamāne dvādaśapaṇo daṇḍaḥ pañcabandho vā*, *Artha.*, 3. 13. 33-34, has been translated by Kangle as follows : "In case of non-payment of the wage the fine is one-tenth or six *paṇas*. In case of denial, the fine is twelve *paṇas* or one-fifth." Kangle, *op. cit.*, II, p. 275. The reasons for adopting this translation has been elaborated by Kangle, *Idid.*, n. 33. Another advantage of accepting Kangle's rendering would be that it would give us a single rate of wage, i.e., sixty *paṇas* (10×6 or 5×12), instead of two sets. In that case the wage rate given was monthly and not daily. Kangle, *op. cit.*, III, p. 209, however, is of the view that sixty *paṇas* for a labourer's wage was an annual rate. We must, however, note here that Kangle's view derives some strength from another provision in Kautilya that certain categories of agricultural labourers employed by the director of agriculture were to get a monthly wage of $1 \frac{1}{4}$ *paṇa* in addition to certain amount of grain, *Artha.*, 2. 24. 28. But the evidence of *Manusmṛiti* (VII. 125-26) would go against the theory of Kangle.

19. *Patañjali* (V. 4. 116) does not mention *paṇa* but speaks of *kārṣāpaṇa* which might have been the same as *paṇa*, Puri, B. N., *India in the Time of Patañjali*, pp. 131 ff.

20. The provision of the *Śāntiparvaṇ* (60. 25-26) refers to Vaiśya herdsmen and labourers, but they may have applied to the Śūdras as well, Sharma, *Śūdras*, p. 226, n. 6.

21. For divergent views on the question, see Pran Nath, *Economic Condition in Ancient India*, p. 158 ; Sharma, *Śūdras*, pp. 226-27 ; Maity, *Economic Life*, p. 149.

21a. *Artha.*, 4. 1 ; *Manu.*, VIII. 215-20, 229-44, 396-97 ; *Yāj.*, II. 164-65, 177-81, 193-98, 238 etc.

22. Cited in *Artha.*, 3. 14. 6. as the opinion of teachers, *upasthitamakārayataḥ kṛitameva vidyāt ityācāryāḥ*.

22a. See above, pp. 230-32 ; *Artha.* 5. 3. 16-17.

23. The *Mahākaraṇas* of the *Arthasāstra* (5. 2. 17-23) might have been an example of big industrialists.
24. *Seṭṭhiṇi nissāya vasantassa tunnaḥārassa tunnakam-mena Jivissāma, Jāt.*, IV. 38.
25. *Milinda.*, p. 331 ; *SBE*, XXXVI, p. 210, n. 6.
- 25a. Bose. A. N., *SRENI*, II, p. 204.
26. *Jāt.*, III. 446. The couple was strictly speaking not husband and wife. they had met and only cohabited. This gives us a peep into the remarkably free atmosphere of the social life of the working people. Bose, A. N., *op. cit.* II. p. 428, n. 1.
27. *Artha.*, 5. 3. 7. Sharma. *Śūdras*. p. 157 ; Kangle. *op. cit.*, II, p. 351.
28. *Artha.* 2. 15 ; *JBORS*, XII, 198 ; Sharma, *Śūdras*. p. 151, n. 8.
29. Maity, *Economic Life of Northern India in the Gupta Period*, pp. 152-54.
30. *EI*, VIII, p. 36. The words *apīdayitvā* and *kara* precede *viṣṭi* ; this shows that it was forced labour. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, p. 174.
31. *Artha.* 2. 1. 37.
32. Kangle, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 185-92. For a brief survey of the state interference in economy in ancient India see Law, N. N. *Studies in Indian History and Culture*, pp. 116-25.
33. *Artha.*, 2. 35. 1. A 6th century inscription refers to forced labour imposed on smiths, charioteers, barbers and potters—agriculturists were exempted, Choudhury. R. K., *JASB*, XVI, p. 121. Also see Das, Deepak Ranjan, *Economic History of the Deccan*, pp. 63-66.
34. *Yāj.*, I. 120. *Vārttā* is assigned to the *Śūdras* in the *Artha.*, 1. 3. 8. and *vārttā* included trade, *Artha.*, 1. 4. 1 ; *Bṛih.*, *Saṃskāra* verse 530.
- 34a. *Manu.*, X. 92-93, 116.
- 34b. See *Supra*. Chap. IV, pp. 166-68.
35. Brhaspati laid down that a *Śūdra* partner in business had to pay 1/6th of his profit as against 1/9th of the *Vaiśya*,

1/10th of the Kṣatriya and 1/20th of the Brāhmaṇa, *Birh.*, XIII. 16.

36. *Supra.* Chap. IV on Vaiśya.

37. *Manu.*, X. 4.

38. Even in these matters the rules were relenting and Śūdras were gradually being allowed some participation in the religious life of the community.

39. Note such expressions as *vṛṣalyā saha modate*, *Manu.*, III. 191.

39a. *Manu.*, X. 64-65 ; *Yāj.* I. 96.

40. The more prosperous a Śūdra was the better must have been the chances of his daughter's hand being accepted by the members of the upper *varṇas*.

41. *Manu.*, II. 165, 169-70, III. 156, IV. 99, X. 4, 127 etc ; *Yāj.* I. 121 ; Kane, *HDS*, II, pt. I, pp. 154 ff. However, Aiyangar, K. V. R., suggested that the *upanayana* of the Śūdras was done without a formal ceremony, *Aspects of the Political and Social System of Manu*, p. 145.

42. *Manu.*, III. 164, 178-79 ; *Yāj.* I. 127.

43. Some Brāhmaṇas could always be induced to minister to the religious needs, howsoever trivial they might have been, of even the 'unclean' Śūdras, Blunt, H., *The Caste System of Northern India*, p. 300.

43a. *Manu.*, III. 197.

44. *Mbh.*, XII. 328. 49 (Cr. ed. XII. 314. 45) cited by Hopkins, *Religions of India*, p. 425; *Bhāg.* I. 425-29, *Bhaviṣya*, I. 1. 72.

45. *Artha.*, 2. 27. 24-30 ; *Manu.*, VIII. 65, 361-63, the women of actors and stage players are treated at par with prostitutes.

46. Keith, *The Sāṃkhya System*, p. 100 ; both these systems, *Sāṃkhya* and *Yoga* received their final form during the early Gupta period, Kieth, *ibid.*, p. 57 ; the *Mīmāṃsakas* were also liberally disposed to allow the Sudras to have education, Mookerji, R. K., *Ancient Indian Education*, p. 274.

47. *Vajrasūci*, p. 4.

48. Jayaswal, K. P., *Manu and Yājñavalkya*, p. 241.

49. Sharma, *Śūdras*, p. 266. The expression *bhṛtakā-dhyāpaka*, explains the *Mitāksarā*, is a teacher who accepts fees for giving instruction. The expression appears in connection with enumerating the categories of Brāhmanas not to be invited to the *Śrāddha*, *Yāj.*, I. 222-24. The list substantially agrees with the same given in the *Manusmṛti*. III. 150-67, especially III. 156, which also forbids fees-accepting Brāhmaṇa teacher to be invited to the *śrāddha*.

50. *Kṛtaśilpo api nivasetkṛtakālam gurorgṛhe antevāsi guruprāpta bhojanastatphala pradah*, *Yāj.*, II. 184.

51. Treatises on various branches of arts seem to have developed from quite an early period. For a list of such works see Bhattacharya, Tarapada, *The Canons of Indian Art*. pp. 87-102, 327 ff; cf. Shukla, D. N., *Vāstu Śāstra*. II. pp. 50 ff and introduction, *Samarāṅga Sūtradhāra*, 3.

52. *Manu.*, I. 86, IV. 229-35, *Yāj.* I. 198-213. The importance of gifts for attaining religious merit has been discussed by Hazra, *Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, p. 247 ff; the doctrine that the making of gifts to worthy recipients confers great merit found its first prominent expression according to Hazra in the *Yājñavalkya-smṛti*, Hazra, *ibid.* It seems that it reached its high water mark in the Law Book of Bṛhaspati, Aiyangar, K. V. R., *Bṛhaspati smṛti*, introduction p. 162.

53. On this ambivalence of attitude of the law givers see *Supra*, Chap. II on Brāhmaṇa. Also see Sharma, *Śūdras*, p. 273.

54. *Kūrma Purāṇa*, Chap. 30, pp. 304-5, cf. *Matsya.*, 272. 46-47; *Vāyu.*, 58. 58-49; *Brahmāṇḍa.*, II. 31. 39-49. Although the passage in the *Kūrma Purāṇa* is ascribed to the period 700-800 A. D., Hazra, *Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, p. 178, it most probably describes the conditions of the post-Mauryan period since the passage is similar to the parallel ones in the earlier Purāṇas like *Vāyu. Matsya*, etc.

55. *Manu.*, VIII. 142; *Yāj.*, II. 37; *Viṣṇu*, VI. 15; Sharma, R. S., *Light on Early Indian Society and Economy*,

pp. 122-23. Attempts to justify different rates of interest for different *varṇas* on the ground that creditworthiness of borrower dependent upon his social standing (Mudgal, B. S., *Political Economy in Ancient India*, p. 153) does not appear to be convincing. If creditworthiness lay at the basis of this rule, the rich merchants of the Vaiśya *varṇa* should have been asked to pay the lowest rate and not the Brāhmaṇas. The rule was a product of *varṇa* bias, pure and simple.

55a. Sharma, R. S., *Śūdras*, p. 181.

55b. *Bṛh.* XIII. 16.

56. *Artha.*, 2. 1 and 2. 24 for peasants and 5. 2. 20-21 for artisans.

57. Some of the petty state personnels e. g. the *chāṭas* and *bhāṭas* of the police and army were hated by the public because of their harrassing attitude, *Harsacarita*, VII; cf. Maity, *Economic Life*, p. 64.

58. Das, Deepak Ranjan, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-83; a number of epigraphic evidences have been cited by the author; cf. Mirashi, V. V., *Journal of the Nagpur University*, 1937, no. 3, p. 24; Ghoshal, U. N., *Hindu Revenue System*, p. 195.

59. *Manu.*, VIII. 68; *Yāj.*, II. 69; cf. *Artha.*, 3. 11. 29 where the restriction seems to have been confined only to the Cāṇḍālas and the *patitas*.

59a. *Artha.*, 3. 11. 30-31; *Manu.*, VIII. 69; *Yāj.*, II. 72.

60. *Artha.*, 3. 11. 32. Kangle's translation, *op. cit.*, II, p. 264. In the opinion of R. S. Sharma the provision bars the servant to give evidence against the master, *Śūdras*, p. 160, n. 9.

60a. A general idea of the Penal Code of the time is provided by *Manu.*, Chap. VII; *Yāj.*, Chap. II; *Artha*, Bk. 3, etc.

61. For a discussion on the status of the wife in such hypergamous marriages studied against the modern background, see Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus*, Chapter 5.

62. *Artha.*, 3. 6. 17-18; *Manu.*, IX. 151, 153-55; *Yāj.*, II. 125. Even if the only son of a man of upper *varṇa*

happened to be born of a Śūdra wife he was entitled to only one-third of the property., *Artha.*, 3. 6. 22. or one-tenth of it, *Manu.*, IX. 154. By another clause Manu declares that a Śūdra woman's son by a upper *varṇa* man had no legal claim to any share of the father's property, he was to receive as charity whatever the father would give. *Manu.*, IX. 155.

62a. *Manu.*, IX. 186-87.

63. See *Supra*, pp. 151-53.

64. *Yāj.*, II. 291 ; see *Mitākṣarā* s gloss.

65. *Manu.*, IX. 48. Cf. IX. 55.

66. Ghoshal in *Comp. HI*, p. 471.

67. *Artha.*, 4. 12. 3, 24, 28.

68. McCrindle, J. W., *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, pp. 68, 211-13 ; Chanana, however, states that the Greek evidences on slavery in India have not been looked at as a whole. Megasthenes' statement had validity, if at all, for some limited regions and not for the whole country. Greek evidences prove the existence rather than the absence of slavery in India, Chanana, D., *Slavery in Ancient India*. pp. 102-04. It is also likely that the statement of Megasthenes was meant to be more a criticism of the Greek slave system than a description of the Indian condition. Thapar, R., *Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*, pp. 89-91.

69. *Nārada*. 5. 26 extends the list to 15 types : also see *Mitākṣarā* on *Yāj.*, II. 183 ; Kane. *HDS*, II, pt. I, pp. 183 ff.

69a. Kangle, *op. cit.*, III, p. 186.

70. *Artha.*, 3. 13. 1-4. Kangle. *op. cit.*, III. p. 187. has taken the restriction on making an *āryaprāṇa* a slave as covering also the Śūdras ; Chanana does not agree to this line of interpretation that Kautilya had forbidden the enslaving of Aryas, Chanana, *op. cit.*, pp. 99 ff : cf. *Manu*. VIII. 411-14. By the time of Yājñavalkya, however, this restriction could not be maintained any longer ; slavery was perhaps becoming more wide-spread to include some twice-born persons also, Chattopadhyaya, S., *Social Life in Ancient India*. pp. 141-43.

71. Sharma, *Śūdras*, p. 163.

72. *Artha.*, 3. 13. 15-19; Śaṁma has drawn the attention to the fact that two terms *āryatvam* and *adāsa* have been used in the *Arthaśāstra* for manumission. The former was applied to the twice-born persons reduced to temporary slavehood (*āhitaka*) and the latter to the Śūdra slaves proper, *Śūdras*, pp. 165-66. But the term *ārya* has been used for an emancipated slave (*dāsa*) also, *Artha.*, 3. 13. 21, *dāsamanurūpeṇa niṣkrayeṇāryamakurvato dvādaśapaṇo danḍaḥ*. If guilty of such conducts as attempt to flee or steal, etc., however, a pledged labourer could be reduced to slavery, *Artha.*, 3. 13. 6-8; Cf. Kangle, *op. cit.*, II, p. 272, n. 6, 7.

72a. *Artha.*, Bk. 2, Chap. 13.

72b. *Manu.*, IV. 253.

73. *Milinda.*, *hīna kujātiko*, p. 357.

74. *Rājānah śūdrabhūyiṣṭhāh pākhaṇḍānaṁ pravarttakāh*, *Brahmāṇḍa.*, II. 31. 41; cf. king Menander's conversion to Buddhism. Some other cases of foreigners adopting Buddhism and other non-Brahmanical sects have been cited by Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, pp. 388-90. The *Aṅgavijjā* divided the four *varṇas* into two major categories, *ajja* (*āryā*) and *milakkhu* (*mleccha*); Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas are included among the Aryas. By implication, therefore, the Śūdras were included among the *mlecchas*. *Aṅga.*, p. 149. The term *mleccha* in Indian literature was ordinarily used for both the indigenous tribes as well as foreigners who were outside the pale of the orthodox Hindu society, Kane, *HDS*, II, pt. I, p. 383. The Śūdras, a bloc of the orthodox fourfold divisions of the society, were usually not counted among the *mlecchas*. The *Arthaśāstra* e. g. distinguished the Śūdras from the *mlecchas*, Kangle, *op. cit.*, III, p. 144. *Patañjali*, however, includes the Yavanas and Śakas among the Śūdras though he distinguishes them from the ordinary Śūdras. He states that unlike the ordinary Śūdras the Yavanas and the Śakas lived beyond the pale of the Aryan society, Agrawala, V. S., *India As Known to*

Panini, p. 78. It appears, therefore, that the attitude of the *Aṅgavijjā* was similar to that of *Patañjali* and marks a departure from the accepted standard of the society. The *Aṅgavijjā* and *Patañjali* possibly reflect some important changes going on in the society. Interestingly, at another place the *Aṅgavijjā* divides the society into two divisions—*ajja* (*ārya*) and *pessa* (labourers), *Aṅga.*, p. 218. And here the *ajja* class is said to have included not only the first three *varnas* but also some *Śūdras*, obviously the well-to-do *Śūdras* who did not have to live by manual labour, Yadava, B. N. S., *Kuṣāṇa Studies* ed. G. R. Sharma, pp. 77-78. Any way from the fact that the term *mleccha* in the *Aṅgavijjā* included *Śūdras*, we may conclude that in the eyes of the orthodox the foreigners were not distinguishable from the *Śūdras*. Also see Chattopadhyaya, B., *Kushāṇa State and Indian Society*, pp. 186 ff.

74a. Pergiter, *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, p. 56.

74b. See above, pp. 78-79.

75. Derrett, *Religion Law and the State in India*, p. 173.

CHAPTER VI

1. *Supra*, Chap. IV, note 14; Jha, V., 'From Tribe to Untouchable: The case of Nisadas' in *Indian Society: Historical Probings*.

1a. Hutton writes that there are some 3,000 different castes in modern India. Hutton, *Caste in India*, p. 149. The condition in ancient period was perhaps not much different. On the basis of traditional legal literature Wilson has compiled a list of 134 castes. Wilson, *Indian Caste I*, pp. 65 sq. Some 170 castes have been listed by Kane also, *HDS*, II, pt. I, pp. 69 sq. The *varna* theory had to be stretched at several points, Kosambi, D. D., 'Early Stages of the Caste System in Northern India' *JBBRAS*, 1946; Jha, V., 'Varṇasaṃkara in the Dharmasutras: Theory and Practice' *JESHO*, pt. III, 1970; Rai, Jaimal, *The Rural Urban Economy and Social Changes in Ancient India*, pp. 269-73.

2. *Pāṇini*, II. 1. 59.

3. Agrawala, V. S., *India as known to Pāṇini*, pp. 439-42.

4. *Br. Up.*, II. 1. 15 ; *Pāṇini*, IV. 4. 28 mentions the term *pratiloma* and *anuloma* though the meaning and context of the words do not make it certain that inter-caste marriages are meant ; Kane, P. V., *HDS*, II, pt. I, p. 52.

5. Derrett, however, believes that some of the mixed castes may have actually originated from unusual matings between classes, *Religion Law and the State in India*, p. 175 ; cf. Risley, *op. cit.*, pp. 82 ff.

5a. Bhattacharya, J. N., *Hindu Castes and Sects*, pp. 9-14.

6. Hutton has seized upon Manu's scheme to support his theory that the caste system originated from the imposition of an invading patrilineal system on an existing matrilineal one. Hutton, *op. cit.*, Chap. X.

6a. Baudh, I. 8. 6, I. 9. 3 ; *Nārada*, *śrīpumsa*, 106 ; *Artha.*, 3. 7. 20.

7. *Manu.*, X. 24-25 ; *Mitākṣarā* on *Yāj.*, I. 96 ; Medhātithi on *Manu.*, V. 88 ; *Nārada.*, *Śrīpumsa*, 102, however, restricts the term to the offsprings of *pratiloma* marriages ; Kane, *HDS*, II, pt. I, pp. 59-60.

8. *Manu.*, X. 40, 57 ; cf. *Mbh.*, XIII, 48. 29.

9. Regarding the names, numbers, derivations, etc., of the mixed castes law givers differed from a very early period. *Gaut* gives their number as eleven and *Baudh* gives fourteen, *Vas* mentions six and *Āpas* only three, Jha. V., *JESHO*, 1970, pt. III, pp. 277-78 ; Kane, *HDS*, II, pt. I, pp. 52 ff.

10. On *Yaj.*, I. 95 ; On *Manu.*, X. 31.

10a. *Baudh*, I. 8. 7 ; *Vas*, XVIII. 8 ; *Artha*, 3. 7. 21-22.

11. *Baudh.*, I. 8. 9 ; *Artha.*, 3. 7. 31-34 ; *Manu.*, X. 18-19.

12. *Majj. Nik.*, 93, 96, 129 ; *Ang. Nik.*, II. 85 ; Bose, A. N., *op. cit.*, II, p. 435.

13. *Manu.*, X. 28-31, 36, 45-46 ; Jha, *JESHO*, 1970, pt. III, pp. 283-85. Kosambi, D. D., *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, p. 253.

- 13a. Fick, *op. cit.*, pp. 204 ff, *cf.* Kangle, *op. cit.* III. p. 146.
14. *Milinda.*, p. 331.
15. Bose, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 438-40.
16. *Manu.*, X. 52 ff. Was it because the Caṇḍāla was so poor and deprived that his persence during the night in the locality of the prosperous was considered a threat to their prosperity ?
- 16a. *Artha.*, I. 14. 10 ; *Jāh.* III. 233 ; Pusalker. A. D., *Bhāsa : A Study*, pp. 359-60.
17. Fick, *op. cit.*, p. 205.
18. Kane, *HDS*, II, pt. I. p. 88.
19. Fick, *op. cit.*, p. 206.
20. Cited by Bose, A. N., *op. cit.*, II, p. 446, n. 1 ; Jha, *JESHO*, 1970, pt. III. p. 285.
21. Cited by Kane, *HDS*, II, pt. I, p. 89. References to *Mrtapās* are said to be very scanty, Jha *IHR*, 1975, II, no. 1, p. 21.
22. Puri, B. N., *India in the Time of Patañjali*, p. 91.
23. *Baudh.*, I. 9. 3, II. 2. 33-34 ; *Vas.*, XVIII. 8 ; *Manu.*, X. 8 ; *Yaj.*, I. 91 ; *Artha.*, 3. 7. 21. Some writers, however, draw a distinction between Nisāda and Pārsava ; *Gaut*, IV. 14 as interpreted by Haradatta, e. g. states that a Brāhmana gives birth to a Niṣāda on a Vaiśya woman and a Pārsava on a Śūdra female. *Nārada.*, *Strīpuṃsa*, V. 108 agrees that Pārsava is the offspring of a Brāhmana male and Śūdra female but describes the Niṣāda as the issue of a Ksatriya by a Śūdra woman.
24. Law, B. C., however, distinguishes between the 'Niṣādas' and 'Niṣādhas', while the former were non-Aryans the latter were Aryans according to him, *Tribes in Ancient India*, pp. 93-101. Jha, V., agrees with the older scholars and thinks that the Niṣadas were originally a tribe who later became an untouchable caste. 'From Tribe to Untouchable : The case of Niṣādas' in *Indian Society : Historical Probings*, ed. Sharma R. S., pp. 67 ff.

25. *Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra*, I. 1. 12-14 ; Kane, *HDS*, II, pt. I, p. 46. Rudra in connection with the worship of whom these religious rights were offered to the Niṣāda was originally a non-Aryan tribal god, Marshall, J., *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization*, I, p. 52. Although some scholars still contest Marshall's opinion (e. g. Sastri, K. A. N., *Cultural Heritage of India*, IV ed. Bhattacharya, H. D., pp. 65-67) most of the scholars agree with Marshall that Saijvism was of pre-Aryan origin and that Rudra absorbed the characteristics of some non-Aryan deities and was accepted as a god by several non-Aryan tribes, Bhargava, P. L., *India in the Vedic age*, p. 293. The juxtapositioning of ascetic and erotic elements, one of the premier characteristics of the later Saiva mythology, is found right from the pre-Vedic period, O' Flaherty, W. D., *Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Siva*, pp. 5, 9.

25a. *Āp. Śr. Sūt.*, XVII. 26. 18 ; *Lātyāna Śrautasūtra*, VIII. 2. 8.

26. Kane, *HDS*, II, pt. I, p. 86. A different derivation, meaning one who has settled down, i. e. settled aboriginals, is also given by some scholars, Macdonell and Kieth, *Vedic Index*, I, pp. 453-54.

27. *Mitākṣarā* on *Yāj.*, I. 91 ; Medhātithi on *Manu.*, X. 8.

27a. *Vas.* XIV. 2 ; *Manu.*, IV. 215 ; *Viṣṇu*, 51. 14 ; *Āpas*, I. 3. 8. 18 ; Bühler, *SBE*, II, pt. I, p. 35, n. 18 ; *Amarakośa*, II. 10. 20 ; Apte, V. M., *Social and Religious Life in the Gṛhyasūtras*, p. 5.

28. Kullūka on *Manu.*, IV. 215 ; *Mitākṣarā* on *Yāj.*, I, 161.

29. *Artha.*, 3. 7. 35 ; cited by Kane, *HDS*, II, pt. I, p. 95 ; Kangle follows a different reading and translates the passage as "A Rathakāra is a Vaiśya (so-called) because of his profession". Kangle, *op. cit.*, II, p. 248, n. 35.

30. *Vaikhānasa Smārta Sūtra*, X. 13.

30a. *Tait. Sam.*, IV. 5. 4. 2 ; *Mait. Sam.*, II. 6. 5 ; Bose, A. N., *SRENI*, II, p. 237.

31. *Annual Report of South Indian Epigraphy*, 1938-39, p. 82 ; *EI*, XXXI, pp. 3 ff.

31a. *Manu.*, X. 47 ; *Viṣṇu*, XVI. 13.

32. *Baudh.*, I. 8. 11-12, I. 9. 13-14 ; *Artha.*, 3. 7. 31 ; *Manu.*, X. 18.

33. *Baudh.*, I. 9. 12 ; *Artha.*, 3. 7. 33 ; *Manu.*, X. 19.

34. *Baudh.*, I. 8. 9 ; *Vaikhānasa Smārta Sūtra*, X. 15 and *Sūta Saṁhitā*, cited by Kane, *HDS*, II, pt. I, p. 97.

35. *Manu*. X. 20-23. The identify of the *vrātyas* has long exercised the minds of Indologists. The majority of scholars connect them in some way or other with non-Aryans. The latest scholar to investigate the question identifies the *vrātyas* with the non-Aryan tribes of eastern India especially with the Vajjis who had a distinct and high culture of their own, Choudhary, Radhakrishna, *Vrātyas in Ancient India*, pp. 11-33. For a resume of the opinion of previous scholars see *ibid.*, pp. 6-9. Agrawala, V. S., identifies the *vrātyas* with *vrātas*, aboriginal war-like tribes, *India as Known to Pānini*, pp. 439-42. *Vrātas* according to Weber, A., *History of Indian Literature*, p. 78 and Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, II, p. 344, were non-Brahmanical western warrior tribes. Also see Buddha Prakash, *ABORI*, XXX.

35a. *Manu.*, X. 44.

36. Nesfield, *Brief view of the Caste System*, pp. 114-16 ; Risley, *The People of India*, p. 266.

37. Hutton, *Caste in India*, pp. 170-71.

38. Banerjee, N. R., *Iron Age in India*, pp. 76, 95-96.

39. According to some scholars this bias was not a bias against manual labour in general but it was only a deterrent against the Brāhmaṇas taking to craft and industry leaving their prescribed occupation of teaching and religious performances, Das, S. K., *Economic History of Ancient India*, pp. 189-90.

40. *Manu.*, III. 158, IV. 84-85, 215 ; Bose, A. N., *SRENI*, II, pp. 242-43. That prosperity alone was not always sufficient to upgrade a group in the caste structure is

perhaps illustrated by the Suvarṇavaṇikas of Bengal who despite their claim to be descendants of the Vaiśyas, their wealth, education, their high-bred appearance—the beauty of their female folk :was proverbial—were not considered even clean Śūdras. The Suvarṇavaṇikas, however, ascribe their low social position to royal antagonism. Their refusal to lend money to Ballāla Sena, the famous king of Sena dynasty, incurred his displeasure who conspired to degrade them from their original caste status, Risley, *The People of India*, pp. 119 ff. The ruler as the guardian of social order might of course misuse his power.

41. *Supra*, Chap. I. The Nāgaraka in the *Kāmasūtra* may be cited as one of the best representative of this class, Panikkar, K. M., 'An Introduction to Vātsyāyana' in *Studies in Indian History*, pp. 164-68.

41a. Jha, V. 'Stages in the History of Untouchables', *IHR*, vol. II, no. 1, 1975, pp. 23-24.

42. That the Andhras have been included among the mixed castes only strengthens the theory that the Āndhra Śātavahana dynasty was a Brāhmaṇa dynasty and the appellation Āndhra came to be given to them because of their association with the Āndhra country. Andhra people counted among the mixed castes by Manu were different from the so-called Āndhra dynasty. See also Ray Choudhuri, *PHAI*, p. 343 ; Sastri, ed., *Comp. HI*, pp. 296 ff ; Law, B. C., *Tribes in Ancient India*, pp. 164-65. The Ābhīras also mentioned as a mixed caste in the *Manusmṛiti* perhaps acquired political significance after the composition of the *Manusmṛiti*. Ābhīra king Iśvarasena who is regarded as the founder of the Ābhīra political power was probably crowned in the year 248-49 and founded the Kālacurī Cedi Era, Majumdar, ed. *AIU*. p. 222 ; Cf. *ABORI*, XXVII, pp. 1 ff. If this suggestion is accepted this may give us a clue to the upper date limit of the composition of the *Manusmṛiti*.

42a. The tribes of the Gangetic plain were conquered and assimilated into the kingdoms of Kosala and Magadha,

Kosambi, D. D., *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India*, pp. 120-32. Aśoka in his inscriptions not only refer to a number of tribes but also threatens them with punitive measures if they did not behave themselves, Rock Edict, XIII.

43. *Manu.*, X. 28-31, 45, 50.

44. Kangle, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 149-50.

45. A modern sociologist writes, "In the main Hindu society seems to have grown by adding new blocks to itself, while allowing these blocks to retain a measure of autonomy and identity. Traditionally the unit of absorption was generally a community rather than an individual and this had important consequences for the development of a multi-racial, multi-ethnic society in India." Beteille, Andre, *Castes Old and New*, p. 32 ; cf. Bose, N. K., *Cultural Anthropology and Other Essays*, pp. 156-170 ; *The Structure of Hindu Society*, pp. 43-71 ; Mandelbaum, D. G., *Society in India*, pp. 573 ff.

46. *Artha.*, 3. 7. 36, 40 ; cf. *Manu.*, VIII. 41.

47. Artisans and agricultural castes were generally considered 'clean' but some manufacturing castes like brewers and sellers of liquor, oil manufacturers, leather workers, basket makers, etc., were regarded 'unclean' till very recently, Bhattacharya, J. N., *Hindu Castes*, pts. XI, XIII, and pp. 202 ff.

48. *Rajakaścarmakāraśca naṭo buruḍa eva ca, Kaivartameḍabhīlaśca saptaite antyajāh smṛitāh. Mitākṣarā* on *Yāj.*, III. 265.

49. *Mitākṣarā* on *Yāj.*, I. 273.

50. *Mitākṣarā* on *Yāj.*, III. 260. Yadava, B. N. S., *Society and Culture in Northern India*, pp. 45-50.

50a. For a survey of the untouchables see Jha, V, *IHR*, Vol. II, no. 1, 1975 pp. 14 ff.

51. Kane, *HDS*, II, pt. I, pp. 168-73. Even a modern study has yielded the following result : "The low rank of Harijans was derived from cumulative inequalities in the

economic, political and ritual systems", Beteille Andre, *Castes Old and New*, p. 93.

52. Ghurye, *Caste, Class and Occupation*, p. 214.

53. Hutton, *Caste in India*, p. 207.

54. *Br. Up.*, I. 3. 10.

55. Caṇḍāla, Śvapāka, *Manu.*, X. 51-56.

56. Meḍas, Āndhras, Cuñcus, Māgdus, Niṣādas, Kṣattris, Ugras, Pukkusas, *Manu.*, X. 40-49.

57. Śūtas, Management of horse and chariots, *Manu.*, X. 47.

58. Kārāvara, Dhigvanas, *Manu.*, X. 36, 40.

59. Drum made of the skin of dead animal, Vena, *Manu.*, X. 49.

60. Singh, Mohinder, *The Depressed Classes*, pp. 79 ff. All these castes were not always poor—the Kurmis in U. P. were quite prosperous, Blunt, *Caste System in Northern India*, p. 265.

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INDEX

- Ābhīras, 3, 203, 219, 282
 Ācārangasūtra, 22, 56, 240, 245
 246, 264
 Ācārya, a caste, 219
 adāsa, 276
 adhipati, 88
 Adhya, G. L., 22, 238, 239, 240,
 241, 242
 adultery, 101-02, 151-53, 188-89
 agnihotra, 111
 Agnipurāṇa, 211, 251
 Agrawala, V. S., 20, 236, 240, 241,
 249, 265, 266, 276, 278, 281
 agriculture, 12-16, 49-50, 107, 117,
 129-30, 144-45, 156, 157, 159
 Ahicchatra, 7
 Āhnikā, 219, 221
 āhnikā, 186, 192, 195, 276
 Ait. Br., 75, 76, 110, 199, 213, 224,
 250, 256, 257, 268
 Aiyangar, K. V. R., 55, 243, 244,
 246, 272, 273
 ājīvanārtham, jīvika, 39, 75, 243
 ākhyāyikā, 80
 Alexander, 2, 92, 248
 Allan, J., 133
 Altekar, A. S., 236, 240, 254
 amācca, amātya, 84, 85, 86, 137,
 197, 244, 252
 Amarakośa, 264, 280
 Amaravati, 128, 130, 141, 142
 Ambastha, 203, 205, 214, 219, 221,
 222
 Ambastha, 90
 Āmbhi, 103
 amritabala, 79, 251
 anantara, 175
 Anāthapīṇḍika, 115, 136, 137, 138
 Andhras, 70, 71, 84, 199, 219, 221
 224, 228, 282
 Aṅga, 115, 249
 Aṅgavijjā, 16, 19, 20, 27, 140, 141,
 142, 166, 239, 240, 241, 248,
 264, 265, 266, 269, 270, 276, 277
 Aṅguttaranikāya, 117, 258, 278
 anīkasta, 87
 antevāsi, 182
 antyaja, 188, 227, 228, 234, 235
 Antyavasāyin, Antāvasāyin, 97, 98,
 207, 221, 227, 228
 anuloma, 62, 202, 203, 204, 205,
 206, 213, 215, 216, 217
 anuseṭṭhi, 133
 anyasya preṣya, 157
 āpaṇka, 140
 Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra, 42, 45,
 202, 228, 244, 245, 258, 278
 Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra, 257, 258,
 280
 āpatkāla, time of distress, 49, 50,
 52, 143, 144, 195, 245
 Apte, V. M., 280
 apuṇka, 141
 ardhisitika, ārdhika, 161, 168
 arhat, 53, 248
 army, 49, 78-79, 82-84, 253
 Arrian, 86
 artisans, 23-24, 108, 110-11, 113-14,
 115, 122, 135, 143-44, 161-62,
 164-65, 169, 184, 185, 240-41,
 269
 āryatvam, 276
 aśauca, impurity, 95, 149
 assault, 38, 60, 99
 aśvadāmaka, 87, 111
 Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra, 113
 Āśvamedha, 1
 aśvavāraka, 269
 atavibala, 79, 251
 Atharvaveda, 107, 108, 157, 215,
 256, 257
 Aupamanyava, 212
 Avadānaśataka, 29, 265
 Āvāntya, 219
 avara, 193

- āvesanin*, 163
Āvrta, 219
Āyogava, 206, 207, 220, 221, 222, 229
bāhīrika, 225
Bahudantīputra, 103
Bāna, 253
Bandyopadhyaya, N. C., 258
Banerjee, N. R., 281
Banerjee, R. D., 134, 264
Barua, B. M., 251
Basak, R., 85, 237, 252
Basarh, 134, 135, 137, 138, 146
Basham, A. L., 249
Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra, 49, 50, 207, 211, 214, 215, 217, 245, 258, 259, 261, 278, 279, 281
Baudhāyana Grhya Sūtra, 113, 258
Beteille, A., 255
Bhavata, 136, 146
bhadrānigama, 137
Bhagavadgītā, 103
Bhāgavatapurāṇa, 180, 272
bhāṇḍagārika, 91, 92
Bhandarkar, D. R., 134, 140, 147, 249, 254
Bhandogarth, 136
Bhargava, P. L., 280
Bharhut, 269
Bharukaccha, 4, 26, 31
Bhāsa, 5, 179, 247, 279
Bhāsavyākhyāna, 261
bhāṭa, 274
bhaṭaka, 171
Bhattacharya, H. D., 280
Bhattacharya, J. N., 245, 248, 278
Bhattacharya, T., 273
Bhāṭasvāmin, 172
Bhavisyapurāṇa, 180, 272
bhilla, 228
Bhita, 7, 134, 135, 146
bhṛtabala, 79, 251
bhṛtakādhyaṇika, 273
Bhrukunṭhasīmha, 93
Bhurjakaṇṭhaka, 219
Blunt, E. H., 245, 254, 255, 272
Bongard Levin, 236, 254
Eose, A. N., 63, 132, 271, 237, 248, 258, 264, 265, 278, 279, 280, 281
Bose, N. K., 283
Brahmadeya, 11, 59, 87, 90
Brāhmaṇa
— duties, livelihood and occupations of 39-41, 48-49, 50-52, 56-59, 63, 78-79
— economic life of, 11, 38, 41, 43, 61, 63-64
— forbidden and unworthy occupations, 51-52, 60, 63
— gifts to, 11, 40-43, 47-48, 59-60, 76, 182, 232, 233, 269, 273
— guardian of the society, 37, 46
— judicial and legal power of, 44-45
— political power of, 43-46, 64, 85, 86
— punishments to, 38, 46, 60-61
— purity of conduct, 39, 54-56, 60, 281
— relation with Kṣatriyas, 90, 254
— ruling houses, 71-72
— wives permitted to, 46-47, 61-62
Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa, 179, 273, 276
brāhmaṇakṛta, 200
Breloer, B., 251
Bṛhaspatismṛti, 42, 167, 173, 174, 179, 185, 241, 243, 244, 259, 271, 272, 273, 274
Bṛhadāranyakaupaniṣad, 53, 111, 201, 229, 245, 257, 278, 283
Bṛhatkalpasūtra, 239
Bṛhatkalpasūtra Bhāṣya, 133
Brough, J., 247
Bṛhatkathā, 29
Buddha, Gautama, 58, 61, 62, 65, 92
Buddhacarita, 59, 92

- Buddhaprakash, 135, 137, 241, 258, 262, 264, 281
 Buhler, G., 121, 133, 134, 244, 259, 263, 268, 280
burūda, 228
camdana (dealer in sandalwood), 21, 142
cammakāra, *curmakāra*, 23, 163, 228
carmanna, 199
 Candāla, Śvapāka, 59, 175, 188, 199, 206, 207-210, 213, 218-19, 221, 222, 225, 227, 228, 274, 279
 capitalism, 114-16, 121-24
 Caraka, 22, 240, 248
Cāruḍatta, 5, 6, 236, 239, 240
 cattle-rearing, 119-21
 Chakravartī, N. P., 265
 Chanana, D., 275
Chāndogyaupaniṣad, 112, 208, 250
chatṭakāra, 22
chāta, 274
 Chattopadhyaya, B., 277
 Chattopadhyaya, K., 268
 Chattopadhyaya, S., 275
chayadāhaka, 213
 Choudhury, R. K., 271, 281
chikitsaka, 87
cīnārṇśuka, *cīnapatta*, 239
 Cohn, B., 250
 Cowell, E. B., 247
 crafts, craftsmen, 108, 115-17, 122, 156-58, 161-62, 181, 214-215, 223, 238-39, 268
 Crouzet, F., 244, 248
 Cuñcu, 219, 221, 224
 Cunningham, A., 239
 Damodarpur, 138-40, 146
daṇḍanāyaka, 252
dandanīti, 43, 103
 Darada, 219, 220
 Das, D. R., 271, 274
 Das, S. K., 239, 281
dāsa, 166, 171, 172, 186, 191, 195, 196, 220, 225, 276
dāsa-dasyu, 268
dāśaka, 163
dāśaviśa, 108
 dasuy, 219, 220, 224
 de Bery, W. T., 239
 defamation, 96-99, 150-51
 Derrett, J. D. M., 45, 197, 243-46, 248, 277, 278
 Desai, A. R., 243
devaḍa, 21, 141-42
devalaka, 233, 248
Dhammapada, 55, 56, 246, 248
dhannika, *dhānyavāṇiya*, 141-42
dharmā, 39, 41, 55, 75
dharmānugama, 130
Dhigvana, 219, 222
Dīvyavadāna, 191
Dighanikaya, 16, 245, 254
 dominant caste, 249-50
 Draviḍas, 72, 219
 Drekeimer, C., 250, 254
dukūla, 239
 Dumont, L., 100, 242, 243, 250, 255, 267, 274
dussika, 17, 21, 141, 142
 Dutt, Nalinaksha, 263
 Dutt, N. K., 256-57
drśadbala, 251
 Eggeling, J., 257
Ekaṇṇa Jātaka, 91
 Fa-Hien, 187, 210
 Fick, R., 60, 63, 64, 74, 129, 208, 211, 245, 248, 263, 279
 Fleet, J. F., 251, 269
 fortune telling, 64-65
gadhika, *gandhika*, 20-21, 141-42, 265
gahapati, *grhapati*, 115, 117, 125, 127-32, 134, 135, 141, 248, 263
gahata, *grhata*, 131
gāma, *gāmika*, *gāmasāmika*, *grāmanī*, 12, 108, 132, 133, 215
gaṇa, 47, 89, 254
 Garbe, R., 102
Gautama Dharmasūtra, 39, 46,

- 51, 117, 172, 203, 204, 245, 258, 261, 278, 279
gavikartana, 111
 Ghoshal, U. N., 191, 237, 248, 250, 251, 254, 256, 257, 260, 261, 274, 275
 Ghurye, G. H., 119, 236, 257, 259, 284
 Goebel, R., 126, 262
 goldsmith, 16, 18, 19
 Gonda, J., 252
 Gopal, L., 237, 238, 253
 Gopal, M. H., 237, 238
gothi, 163, 164
gotra, *pravara*, 62, 247, 255
 Govindarāja, 144, 259
 Guha, A., 236
 guilds 17, 18, 23, 24, 114-16, 121-23, 133-38, 141, 162, 181, 241, 264
haranyaka, *herannika*, *haranya-kāra*, 19, 21, 128, 129, 141, 142, 143, 239
halakīya, 129
Haradatta, 203, 279
Harsacanta, 274
 Hazra, R. C., 273
 Hellenistic influences, 5, 7-8, 27
 Henderson, A. H., 233
 Hippalus, 28, 29
 Hitchcock, J. T., 250
 Hsuen Tsang, 253
 Hocart, A. M., 242, 243
 Hopkins, E. W., 86, 238, 272
 Horner, I. B., 127, 132, 262, 263
 Hultsch, E., 236
 Hutton, J. H., 247, 277, 278, 281, 284
iddakāra, 23
 industry, 16-24
 iron-monger, 163-64
itihāsa, *ituvṛtta*, 80, 246
 Jaiminī, 215
Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa, 110-11
 Jain, J. C., 245, 265
 Jain, P. C., 269
 Janaka, 36
janghakārika, 87
Jātakas, 15, 16, 54, 56, 57, 59, 63, 65, 89, 104, 133, 139, 164, 171, 210, 214, 247, 256, 258, 263-65, 269, 271, 279
jatukāra, 22
jātyopakarsa, *jātyutkarsa*, 200
 Jayaswal, K. P., 45, 133, 237, 244, 253, 257, 272
jeṭṭhaka, 116, 137, 139, 164
 Jha, D. N., 237
 Jha, G., 248
 Jha, V., 242, 277, 278, 279, 283
 Jhalla, 219
 Jones, J. J., 129, 247, 248, 263
 Jolly, J., 243
 judicial administration, 44-45, 149-53
 Kaivarta, 219, 220, 228
 Kālidāsa, 1, 44, 244, 252
 Kalyana, Calliena, 4, 25, 26, 125, 128
Kāmasūtra, 12, 239, 282
 Kamboja, 89, 219, 253
kammasa vāṇija, 141
kamsakāra, 22
 Kane, P. V., 237, 243, 245, 248-252, 267, 269, 272, 275-281, 283
 Kangle, R. P., 87, 97, 143, 171-72, 237-38, 241, 248, 250-53, 255, 259-61, 266, 268-71, 274-76, 279-80, 283
kāra, 172, 271
 Karaṇa, 204-05, 216, 219, 220
 Kārāvara, 219-21
karma, 68, 75
karmakāra, *karmika*, 166, 170, 172, 264
karmāra, 108, 113, 163, 199, 215
karmasaciva, 85
kāru, 143, 157, 172, 266
kāruṣa, 219
kāruśāsitarah, 260
kāruśilpi, 170, 266
Kāśikā, 72-74

- Kāthaka Samhitā*, 256-57
kaṭṭho, (boat), 27
Kātyāyana-Śrautasūtra, 200, 257-58, 279
kaulikanikāya, 134
 Kaunapadanta, 103
 Kauśāmbi, 7, 13, 14, 20, 115, 133
 Karve, I., 242, 247, 249
 Keith, A. B., 249, 256-57, 268, 272, 280-81
 Kern, H., 263, 267
 Ketkar, S., 70, 249
khajjakāra, 142
Khāravēla, 2, 14, 80, 256
 Khasa, 72, 219, 220
 king, kinship, 9-11, 45, 47, 59, 75-76, 84, 107
 Koda, 219
kosakāra, *kosejja*, 17
 Kosambi, D. D., 103, 241, 247, 251, 253, 255-56, 277-78
koṭṭimba, *cotymba* (boat), 27
 Kruger, H., 252, 254
Kṛtyakalpataṛu, 243
kṣatradharma, *ksatradvidyā*, 77-78
 Kṣatri, Kṣattiri, 206-07, 218, 222, 228
 Kṣatriya
 — acquisition of ksatriyahood, 70, 73
 — and Brāhmaṇa, 48-49, 53, 90-91
 — duties and occupations, 74-77, in battle, 77-80, 82-83; in administration, 84-89
 — can adopt Vaiśya's mode of living, 87, 93, 253
 — educational and intellectual life of, 79-81, 102-04
 — guardian of social order, 76
 — landholders, 87-93
 — legal position of, 95-102
 — origin and growth of, 70-73
 — sacraments, 94-95
 — wives permitted to, 99-100
ksatriyakṛtiḥ, 200
 Kṣīrasvāmī, 212
kṣudrakārava, 163, 260
 Kukkutaka, 203, 206, 217-18
kulika, 135, 137, 139
 Kuilūka Bhaṭṭa, 144, 253, 259, 269, 280
kumārāmātya, 146
kumbha (a boat), 27
Kūmapuiāḥa, 273
 Kusānas, 2-5, 7, 14, 25-28, 126, 197, 236
kuśīlava, 143, 157, 180, 226
kutumbika, *kutumbin*, 129-30, 248
 labour, labourer, 12, 24, 122-23, 166-70
 labour, forced, 268, 271
 Lal, B. B., 240
Lalitavistāra, 91
 land,
 — big farms, 11-12, 63, 115
 — crown, 10
 landholders, 87-93, 114, 117, 247
 — reclamation of, 13
 — settlement, 159-61
 — sīra, sīlā, 167
 Lassen, C., 102
Lāyāyana Śrautasūtra, 280
 Law, B. C., 249, 279, 282
 Law, N. N., 254, 269, 271
lekha muddā, 251
 Licchavis, 72, 84, 94, 219
lohakāra, *lohavāṇiya*, *lohakakāraka*, 22, 143, 163-64, 269
lonavāṇijja, 141
 Luders, 12, 125, 128-31, 134-37, 139, 141-43, 163, 181, 236, 239-40, 247, 252, 262-66, 269
 Macdonell, A. N., 249, 256-57, 268, 280-81
 Madraka, 92
 Magadha, 206-07, 221-22, 228
Mahābhārata, 35, 73, 80, 82, 86, 89, 92, 180, 201, 203-04, 209, 239, 241-42, 244, 249-50, 272, 278
Mahābhāṣya, 203, 212, 242-43, 249
mahābhōji, 237
mahādāṇḍanāyaka, 252

- mahākārava*, 163, 260, 271
mahāmatta, 254
Mahāniddesa, 29
Mahāparinibbānasutta, 263
mahārathinī, 237
mahāsāla, 63, 234
mahāsammata, 76
Mahāvastu, 16, 56, 58, 62, 64, 141, 240-41, 247-48, 250, 263
Mahūdharma, 257
Māhīṣya, 205, 216
Maitra, 219
Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā, 256-57, 280
Maitreyaka, 219-20
Maitry, S. K., 172, 239, 262, 270-71, 274
Majjhimanikāya, 258, 278
Majumdar, B. K., 253
Majumdar, R. C., 251, 254
mālākāra, 163
Mallas, 72, 92, 219
māṃsavaniija, 141
Mandelbaum, D. G., 243, 268, 283
Manley, G., 238
manikāra, 19, 125, 143, 163
Mansāra, 264
mantri, 85-86, 252
Mārgava, 219-20
Mārkaṇḍeyapurāna, 218
marriage,
 — mixed, 36, 46-47, 61-62, 77, 99, 118, 153, 176, 187-88, 201-02, 258, 278-79
 — remarriage of women, 100
 — *savarṇa* marriages, 62, 202
 — types of marriage, 99, 118-19
Marshall J., 280
matissaciva, 85
Matsyapuriāṇa, 8, 179, 236-238, 251, 273
maulabala, 79, 251
Mayamata, 264
Mayer, A. C., 250
Mayuraśarman, 254
McCrinkle, J. W., 251, 275
Meda, 219, 221, 224, 228
Medhātithi, 45, 179, 205, 257, 266, 278, 280
Megasthenes, 9, 14, 43, 82, 86, 191, 275
Mehta, R., 252
Metraux, G., 244, 248
Milinda, Menander 73, 80, 84, 276
Milindapañha, 12, 14, 16, 25, 26, 33, 53, 56, 58, 60, 63, 73, 78, 80, 84, 91, 93, 103, 132, 158, 171, 197, 209, 213, 237-38, 240-41, 245-47, 250-51, 254, 260, 263-64, 271, 276, 279
Mīmāṃsā, 180, 272
ministers, 44-45, 85-86, 252
Mirashi, V. V., 239, 267, 274
Mitākṣarā, 181, 183, 194, 214, 227-28, 243-44, 261, 267, 273, 275, 278, 280, 283
mitrabala, 79, 251
Mixed castes,
 — actually professional groups, 204, 206-08
 — development of the concept of, 199-202
 — occupation, real index of their status, 204
 — origin of, 175, 267-68, 277-78
 — prejudices against, 219-29; ethnic prejudices, 224-26. unclean occupations, 226-27
 — primary *anulomas and pratilomas*, 205-07
 — theory of mixed marriages, 201-03
 — untouchability, 227
Mleccha, 193, 197, 220, 276
Mookerji, R. K., 133, 251, 272
Motichandra, 133, 264-66, 240-41
Mṛcchakatika, 61, 64
Mṛtapā, 212, 228, 279
Mudgal, B. S., 274
Mukerji, B., 241
Mūlavāṇiya, 141, 265
Mūrdhāvasikta, 205
Mutiba, 199, 224
nadigāma, 132
nagaraśreṣṭhin, 138-40, 146
Nāgasena, 34, 57, 63, 103, 246

- naigama*, *negama*, *nigama*, 125, 127-28, 132-38, 140-41, 263-64
Nandācārya, 259
Nārada-smṛiti, 46, 51, 92, 167, 207, 238, 241, 243, 275, 278-79
naṭa, 180, 219
Nātyaśāstra, 180
nāva, 27
navakamika, *navakarmika*, 135, 163
Negi, J. S., 134, 238, 264
Nesfield, J. C., 223, 281
nigamasabhā, 134-35
Nīlakantha, 242
Nirukta, 212-13
Niṣāda, 175, 199, 203, 205-06, 209, 211-13, 217, 220-22, 224, 227, 247, 258, 279-80
Niṣādha, 279
Nyāya, 80, 246

odanika, 141
O'Flaherty, W. D., 280
oil industry, oilmen, 20-21, 47, 224
Oldenberg, H., 74

Pāhlava, 84, 219
pañcajanāh, 212
Pande, G. C., 258, 268
Pandey, R. B., 267
Pāṇḍusopāka, 219, 221
Pani, 107, 256
Pānini, 49, 72-74, 114, 200-01, 203, 212, 247, 249, 277-78
Panikkar, K. M., 282
Pannavanā, 266
pannika, 142
pāpanika, 140
Pant, A. D., 250
Pārada, 219
Parāśara, 37
Paramāttahajotika, 115
Pārasava, 205, 279
Pargiter, F. E., 197, 277
Park, R. L., 250
Parsons, Talcott, 233
Patañjali, 33, 37, 72, 144, 166-67, 228, 242-43, 270, 276-77
Patil D. R., 268

patuta, 274
patroṇa, 239
paṭa, 239
Paulkasa, *Pulkasa*, *Pukkusa*, 199, 203-04, 206-07, 210-14, 217-18, 221
Paundraka, *Puṇḍra*, 17, 199, 219, 224
Periplus, 22, 25, 28, 31
pessa, 277
phalavāṇiya, 141, 265
Pisuna, 103
plava, 27
Pliny, *Natural History*, 19, 28, 126
Pokkharasati, 91
pota, 27
prādvivāka, 45, 244
Fran Nath, 270
prathamakāyastha, 139, 146
prathamakulika, 137, 146
pratigraha, 41, 48
pratiloma, 187, 202-03, 206, 208, 214, 216-17, 278
Pratimānātaka, 179
prāyaścitta, 150
Ptolemy, *Geography*, 26
Pulinda, 199, 224-25
pupphachaddaka, 211, 213
Puri, B. N., 242-43, 252, 265, 270, 279
purohita, 43, 44, 64, 87, 91, 112, 234
purusamedha, 110
purusasūkta, 35, 70, 106-07, 231, 257
Pūrvamīmāṃsāsūtra, 215
Pusalker, A. D., 247, 279
Puspadha, 219
Pusyagupta, 146

Rai, G. K., 268
Rai, J., 267, 277
rājā, 91-92
rajaka, 17, 163
rājakṛt, 215
rājan, 106, 107, 215
Rājanyas, 70, 73-74, 107, 109
rājaśabdopajivina, 92

- rāyasūya*, 110-11
Rāmaka, 207
Rāmāyaṇa, 79, 209, 213, 251
 Ranadurjaya, 197
 Rapson, E. J., 133
rāṣṭriya, 84, 85
Rathakāra, 108, 111, 113, 199, 206, 213-16, 223, 266, 280
ratnū, 111, 215
 Roychoudhuri, H. C., 282
 Ray, N. R., 236
Ṛgveda, 70, 72, 106-08, 256
 Rhys Davids, T. W., 37, 131-32, 211, 238, 241-42, 246-47
 Rhys Davids (Mrs), 132, 263, 265
 Risley, H., 278, 281-82
 Rosenfield, J., 236
 Roy, U. N., 264
 Ruben, W., 87, 89-93, 244, 251-52; 254
 Rudra, 212, 258, 280
 Rudradāman, 14, 80, 84-85, 172, 256, 264
rūpakārika, 163, 269

Śabara, 199, 224-25
śabhā, 244
śabhya, 44
śaciva, 85-86, 252
Saddharmapuṇḍarīka, 131, 147, 263, 267
Śaikha, 219
Śairandhara, 219-20
Śakas, Parthians, 2-3, 5, 25, 72, 84, 134, 198, 219, 256, 276
Śākya, 89-91
śalika, (boat), 27
Samarāṅgana Sūtradhāra, 273
Sāmavāyaṅgasūtra, 264
saṁgha, 89-90, 136, 254
saṁghabhṛta, 260
saṁghāḍa (boat), 27
saṁjukāraka, 20-21, 142, 226
saṁkhakāraka, 22
Sāṁkhya, 80, 180, 246, 272
saṁskāra, 38, 94-95, 148-49, 176-77
Samudragupta, 80, 256
sana, 239
sandhivigraha, 267
Sūṅkhāyana Śrautasūtra, 112
 sanskritisation, 73, 249
Śāntiparvan, 35-37, 42, 73, 85-87, 103, 167, 179, 248, 252, 270
 Saran, K. M., 268
 Sarkar, B. K., 246
śārtha, *sattha*, 135, 138-39, 266
śārthavāha, 125, 128, 135, 138-41, 146-47, 264-66
śārthavāhinī, 142, 237
 Sarup, L., 236, 240
 Sarvadhikari, R., 244
 Sarvaṇṇa Nārāyaṇa, 144
śastravikṛayī, 269
 Sastri, K. A. N., 251, 280
śastropajivīn, 89
Śathapatha Brāhmaṇa, 112, 257-58
śātavāhanas, 3, 9, 73, 135, 256
 Śālvata, 219
 Satyanarayana, K., 262
śautrika, 163
śauvāṇṇika *suvannika*, *suvannakāra*, 19, 129, 141-42, 144, 239
 Sen, B. C., 244
senāpati, 9, 92, 137
 Senart, E., 52, 134, 237, 242, 245, 263-64
 Sen Gupta, N. C., 244
setthu śreṣṭhin, *śraśṭhya*, 118, 125, 127, 133, 141, 146-47, 171, 234, 244, 263, 265, 267
setthiguhapati 115, 136
 Shamasastri, R., 255
 sharecropper, sharecropping, 12, 161-62, 167-68, 170
 Sharma, A., 268
 Sharma, B. N., 253, 260
 Sharma, G. R., 236, 238, 240, 277
 Sharma, I., 254
 Sharma, R. S., 86, 108, 111, 119, 143, 171-72, 180-81, 183, 194, 244, 247, 249, 252-53, 256-57, 259, 262, 266, 268-71, 273-74, 276
 Shastri, D. R., 244
 Shukla, D. N., 273
 Siddhanta, N. K., 247

- sikkhā*, 57
 silk trade, 126-27
śilpa, *śilpin*, *śilpi*, 16, 57, 145, 166, 172
 Singh, B. I., 269
 Singh, Mohinder, 284
śingrevānya, 142
śīravāhana, 167-68
 Sinha, H. N., 252
 Sircar, D. C., 129, 251, 254, 262, 264-65, 271
sisṭa, 45
śītādhyakṣa, 168
 slavery, 189-96, 268, 275-76
snātaka, 39, 46, 196
 Somadeva, 264
 Somuttara, 58
 sons of mixed marriages, 46-47, 100-01, 119, 153, 187-88, 202-03, 275
 Spellman, J., 86, 254
 Spooner, D. B., 236
śrāddha, 51, 59, 117-19, 226, 244, 273
śrenī, 134, 137
śrenibala, 79
śreṇīmukhya, 137
Śrideva, 264
Śrīmūla, 261
 Srinivas, M., 73, 242-43, 249
 Srivastava, B., 241
śroṇiya, 38, 42, 46-47, 87
 Staal, J. F., 249
 state.
 — capitalism, 23, 122-24
 — control over market, 123-24
 — farming, 161
 Sterpbach, L., 138, 140, 248, 265
sthānadhikṛta, 147
sthānika, 87
 Strabo, 27, 244, 248
suddarajaka, 17
 Sudhanvan, 219
Sūdra,
 — *anuvasita*, *nuvasita*, 212, 228-29
 — *āryapāṇa*, 194, 275
 — duties and occupations, 76, 156-62, 276-77, agriculture and farming, 12-13, 110-11, 156-61, 167-68, 174, 268; art and craft, 111, 143-44, 181-83, labour, 164-72, trade, 173-74;
 — economically independent and wealthy, 158-61, 163-65, 177, 182-83
 — education of, 178-82, 273
 — legal position of, 185-87
 — marriage rules, 176-77, 187-88
 — *nyāyavartin*, 183
 — origin of, 155-56
 — place in political and administrative life, 70, 86, 196-98
 — relation with *varṇa*, 167-69, 174-75
 — religious life of, 112-14, 177-80, 245
 — slaves, 189-96, 275-76
 — taxation on, 184-85
Śukraśāstra, 11, 88, 238, 253
Suṅga, 2-3, 70-71, 82
Suśrutasaṃhitā, 22, 65, 240, 248
Sūta, 206-07, 215-17, 221-22, 228, 249
Sūtasamhitā, 281
sūnatāṇa, *sānakāraṇa*, 17, 260
Suttampāṭa, 54, 56, 63, 115, 246-48
suttavāmya, 17, 141
suvarnavanika, 282
svavivṛtopajivin, 168
Taittīyīya Brāhmaṇa, 110, 257-58
Taittīyīya Saṃhitā, 110, 256-57, 280
taksaka, *takṣan*, 111, 113, 199, 216
tantuvāya, 17
tappana vanna, 141
 Tarn, W. W., 276
 taxation, 42-43, 65, 93-94, 104, 124-25, 238, 261-62
 Taxila, Taksasilā, 13, 81, 103, 133
 textile, 16-18, 115, 122, 224
 Tinker, I., 250

- Thapaliyal, K. K. 264
 Thapar, R., 249, 263, 275
 trade,
 — and Brāhmanas, 50-51
 — exports, 15, 16, 31
 — foreign, 126
 — growth of, 114-17
 — imports, 31-32
 — routes and centres, 25-31
 — routes and political history, 3-5
 traders, 24-25, 32, 107, 114-15, 127-41
 — abroad, 28
 — compared to rogues and thieves, 32
 — Influences of 125-26
 — profit to, 271-72
 Trautman, T. R., 242
 Trenckner, V. 254
udukabhāgam, 238
udgītha, 229
 Ugra, 203, 205, 211, 214, 217-18, 222
 Ujha, 136, 146
unnavānyc, 17, 141
 untouchability, 227-30
 Upadhyaya, B. S., 252
upanayana, 94, 112, 148-49, 215, 233, 272
upapātaka, 150
uparāja, 91
ur̥ṇa, 239
 Uśanas, 204
 Usavadāta, 10, 134-35
 usury, 51, 183-84, 274
Uttaradhyāyanasūtra, 42, 54, 56, 58-59, 243, 246
Uvasaga Dasāo, 115, 258
 Uvaṭa, 257
 Vadekar, R. D., 251
vāga, 17
 Vaidehaka, 205, 207, 214, 220-22, 227-28
Vaikhānasa Smārtasūtra, 211, 280-81
Vana, *Vena*, 206-07, 209, 213-15, 222
Vaiśesika, 80, 180, 246
Vaiśya,
 — and Sūdras, 109-14, 118, 145-46
 — duties and occupations, agriculture, 13, 110, 116-17, 121, 144-45, 259-60, cattle-rearing, 119-21, trade, 20-21, 114-17, 120-21, 123-42, crafts, 108-14, 143, 263, forbidden acts, 144-45
 — legal position of, 118, 149-54
 — marriage rules of, 118, 153
 — origin of, 105-10
 — the payer of tributes, 76, 110
 — political and administrative position of, 84, 86, 146-47
 — religious life of, 112
 — rich and poor, 114-21
 — sacraments, 118, 149-54
 — social prestige of, 147-48
Vājasaneyī Samhitā, 257
Vajrasūci, 180, 272
Vākātakas, 3, 70, 84
vāṇja vanik, 125, 127, 135, 138, 140-41, 263, 265
vāṇiya, 129, 141, 143
vanijñī, 142, 236
vāra, 147
Varāha Śrautasūtra, 112, 257
vardhakum, 163-65, 269
varṇasaṅkara, *saṅkara*, 202-03
vārtā, *vārtā*, 89, 103, 121, 143, 157, 257, 271
 Vasantasena, 240
Vaśiṣṭha Dharmasūtra, 42, 51, 119, 204, 207, 211, 214, 243, 258-59
Vāstuśāstra, 273
Vāṭadhāna, 219
Vātavyadhi, 103
Vātsyāyana, 282
vatthopajivika, 141
vāhya, 225
Vāyupurāṇa, 179, 273
 Vedic study, 56-57, 74, 178-79, 245-46

- Vessantara, 59-60
 Vidyasagar, J., 253
 Vijnanman, 219
 village settlements, 159-61
Vinayapiṭaka, 115-16, 127, 258, 263, 265
 violation of women, 101-02, 151-52
viś, 106-09, 115, 127, 199
Viśālākṣa, 103
Viśnupurāṇa, 7, 236
Viṣṇusmṛti, 43, 202, 204, 207, 208, 209, 211, 222, 227, 244, 273, 280-81
viśṭi, 171-73, 271
viśṭibandhaka, 171
Viśvarūpa, 205
vāta, 73, 281
vṛāya, 47, 72-73, 94, 200, 203-04, 219-20, 224, 281
vṛāyastoma, 73, 200
Vṛjī 92 281
Vṛṣṇi, 74, 92
vṛtti, 75
 Wagle, N, 127, 131, 262-64
 wages, 164-67, 170, 270
 warfare, 77-79, 81-83
 Warmington E. H., 241
 Watters, T., 253
 weaver, weaving, 165-66, 183, 224
 Weber, A., 281
 Weber, Max, 233, 242, 245, 249, 268
 Wilson, H. H., 236
 Wilson, J., 277
 witness, 95-96
 Wheatley, P., 262
 Wheeler R. E. M., 236
 Woodward F. L., 132, 263
 Woolner, A. C., 236, 240
 Yadava, B. N. S., 238, 277, 283
Yāśastilaka Campu, 264
 Yavanas 8, 9 25, 72, 219, 276
Yoga, 80, 180
Yugaputāna, 237, 266

N. B. The *Manusmṛti*, *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*, *Arthaśāstra* have not been included in the index because these are referred to practically at every page.

ERRATA

| page | line | read | for |
|------|------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 4 | 11 | Bharukaccha | Bharukacha |
| 11 | 2 | tillage | village |
| | 5 | appears | appear |
| 36 | 18 | social | special |
| 38 | 4 | mortal | moral |
| 47 | 19 | And | Then |
| 52 | 13 | āpatkāla | āpadkāla |
| 55 | 25 | Same | Some |
| 57 | 27 | causistry | cauistry |
| 60 | 19 | add | put |
| 61 | 30 | It | If |
| 65 | 3 | •Asita | Asitar |
| 68 | 8 | would | could |
| 72 | 22 | conducive | conductive |
| 73 | 14 | Srinivas | Srinivasa |
| 73 | 29 | Pāṇini (VI. 2. 34) | Pāṇini |
| 78 | 21 | runs | rans |
| 80 | 17 | <i>Udāharāṇa</i> | <i>Udāharara</i> |
| 84 | 24 | inscriptions ³³ | inscriptions |
| 102 | 2 | women | woman |
| 104 | 6 | rulers | rules |
| 108 | 7 | <i>anyasyādyah</i> | <i>anyāsyādyah</i> |
| 112 | 18 | <i>Śāṅkhyāyana</i> | <i>Śāṅkhyāna</i> |
| | 22 | Prayers | Praygrs |
| 113 | 19 | <i>Baudhāyana</i> | <i>Baudh āyan</i> |
| 129 | 10 | term | herm |
| 131 | 18 | <i>gṛhastha</i> | <i>gṛhastā</i> |
| 142 | 6 | <i>candana</i> | <i>chandana</i> |
| 158 | 11 | Vaiśyas | Varśyas |
| 179 | 22 | <i>karṇabhedha</i> | <i>karṇavedha</i> |
| | 25 | <i>Śāntiparvan</i> (314.45) | <i>Śāntiparvan</i> |
| 200 | 19 | <i>jātyopakarṣa</i> | <i>jātyapakarṣa</i> |
| 202 | 12 | sub-caste | ub-caste |
| 242 | 31 | Nīlakanṭha's | Nīlakāntha's |
| 249 | 14 | Śūdras not living | Śūdras living |
| 250 | 26 | Drekmeir | Drekmier |
| 257 | 12 | on to ascend | on the ascend |
| 263 | 3 | <i>Mahāparinibbāna</i> | <i>Mahāparinibhāna</i> |
| | 27 | Kern's | kern's |